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record hunter



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How to anchor in coral waters

Skip Novak's winter voyage to South Georgia

RACING

How Team Vestas was salvaged from a reef

Sydney Hobart face-off: Wild Oats XI v Comanche

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The fast and the steadfast

Two very different super-maxis caused a storm in the Rolex Sydney Hobart race. We get on board the space-age *Comanche* and the eight-times winner, *Wild Oats XI*

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COVER PICTURE

Dr Jim Clark's super-maxi *Comanche* set tongues wagging in the Sydney Hobart.
Photo: Carlo Borlenghi/Rolux





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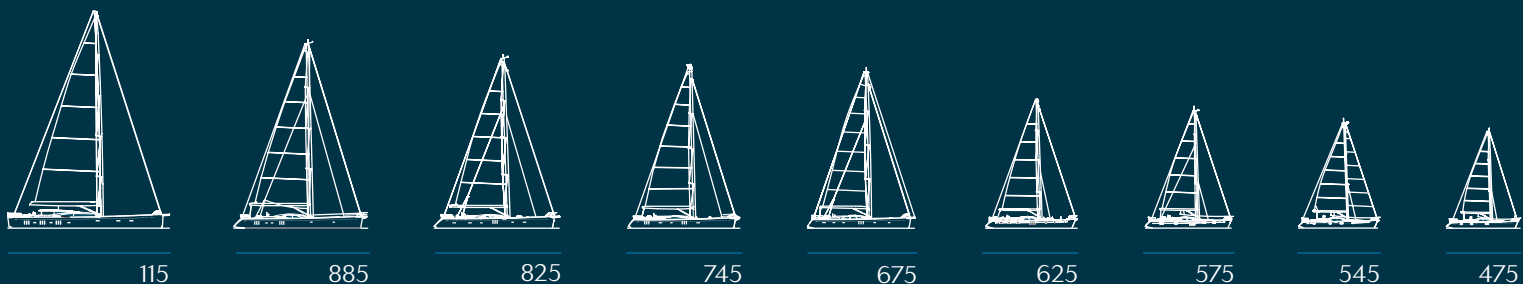
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SILVER SERVICE



Handing over the keys to a service team, as the Volvo Ocean Race crews are doing (page 42) is the norm for many ordinary boat owners. But these teams are

handpicked experts working on identical one-designs. For the rest of us the experience has its pitfalls, as we all know, neatly encapsulated in that sad and worried head-shaking gesture an engineer makes when signifying that the last person to fix the generator/engine/autopilot was a bit of a cowboy and now it's going to cost you to put it right.

It's hard to find the time to keep complex boat systems running, let alone tackle a refit, should you even have the inclination. Anyway, modern equipment is complicated and often fitted into such inaccessible areas that quite simple jobs, such as replacing or repairing water pumps, can end up being rather time-consuming.

And perhaps, if you're like me, occasionally tackling a job with Nigel Calder's biblical *Boatowner's Mechanical and Electrical Manual* close to hand, somewhere down the track you discover you were that offending cowboy – and you are forced to agree with the engineer called on to repair it how hard it is to find decent people these days.

Handing over the keys in home waters, or cruising round Europe is one thing, though; trying to do this further afield is quite another. Hands-off maintenance in more remote areas means you have to be prepared to spend time in sweltering ports waiting for spares or mechanics to arrive.

You will never find this in the brochures, but to go exploring under sail you have to be prepared to wield tools, Sikaflex and duct tape. It may not exactly be living the dream, but it is all part of the deal for self-sufficiency. It's part of the achievement.

All the same, the Volvo Ocean Race crews are lucky people. Arrive in port, park up and go off sightseeing? I'd sign up to that concierge service.



Elaine Bunting
Editor

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A full-page photograph of a sailor on the boom of a sailboat. The sailor, wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts, is looking up and holding onto the boom. The sailboat has a large white sail and a yellow boom. The background shows a blue sky with white clouds and a distant shoreline with hills.

PICTURE THIS

Atlantic classic adventure

The 83ft schooner *Adventuress*, a William Fife III design from 1924, takes the line at the start of the Panerai Transat Classique at Lanzarote, to race to Martinique.

The race was won by the giant schooner *Altair* and a fleet of ten yachts took part.

Photo by James Mitchell/Panerai

PICTURE THIS

Proud *Titania*

Richard Dobbs's Swan 68, *Titania* of Cowes, barrels downwind through the swell during the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. After five years cruising in Asia, she came to the race with a mixture of family crew and top sailors Mark Covell and Brian Thompson. This was her second Sydney Hobart.

Photo by Carlo Borlenghi/Rolex





Photos: S Smart/VOR

The fall and rise of Volvo yacht *Team Vestas Wind*

How the wrecked Volvo Ocean Race yacht was recovered from a remote reef – and in a state suitable for rebuilding. Matthew Sheahan reports

Breaking waves swept into the wrecked carbon hull of Volvo Ocean Race yacht *Team Vestas Wind* as she lay beached on the Cargados Carajos Shoal, 250nm north of Mauritius in November. With the stern ripped open, there was nothing to stop them. The terrible pictures made it clear how lucky the crew had been to escape injury and it seemed the end of the team's Volvo campaign.

But once the yacht settled on the reef and out of the pounding surf, the destruction halted and the team was able to work through the options. It seemed a salvage was possible and repairs could be carried out at a yard in Italy in time for the yacht to rejoin the race for the final legs.

The biggest immediate challenge was to retrieve her from this remote and almost inaccessible reef. Initially it was thought that cutting up the hull in situ would be the only realistic way of clearing the wreckage, with the hope that the deck could be salvaged.

But a few weeks later, as the salvage team was wading around in waist-high water, an unforeseen incident changed the game plan significantly. The recovery was a joint venture between salvage experts Subtech and Svitzer along with Team

Vestas's shore manager, Neil Cox, who was also on scene throughout the operation.

The plan involved diverting a container vessel, the *Jula S*, to rendezvous with the salvage team and carry the wreckage back to Europe. Time would be tight before the ship arrived with just two and a half days to inspect *Team Vestas*, confirm the method of salvage and get the VO65 floating.

In order to stand any chance of hitting this deadline the team had to cut off the keel fin, remove the 98ft rig and ballast the hull

▲ Above: the salvage team assesses the work to be done. ▼ Below: the night-time refloating operation



down by the bow sufficiently to keep the stern out of the water, before they could refloat her in just 40cm of water.

Meanwhile, a 90ft charter fishing yacht had been brought in as a mothership, and a local company, Raphael Fishing, provided additional support.

"One of the key factors in the salvage outcome was that the shoe end of the keel fin had hooked itself under a rock shelf," explained Neil Cox. "This had prevented the boat from being swept further up onto the reef, which meant there was less damage to the hull than we had expected."

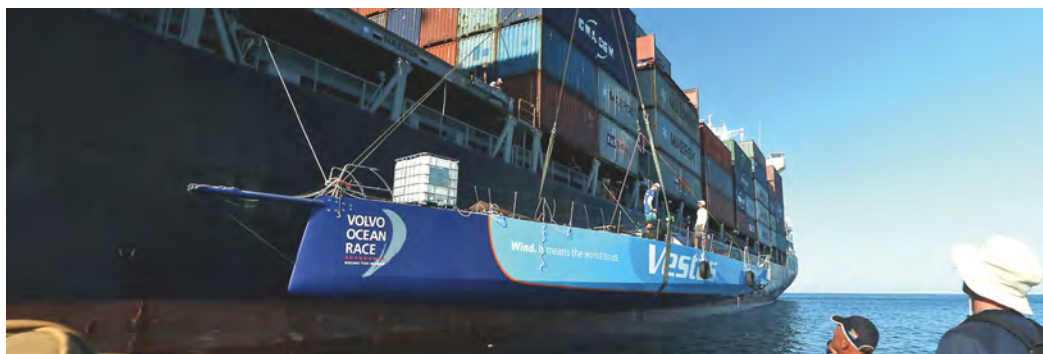
Cutting the keel

With hopes raised, the team still needed to remove the keel fin, a major task in itself. Using specialist cutting equipment, the salvage experts started to cut through the forged steel keel fin. By the end of the second low tide around 80 per cent of the keel fin had been cut.

Team Vestas Wind was tethered with four separate anchors, watertight bulkheads were shut and buoyancy added to the starboard quarter in preparation for the hull to refloat once the keel fin had been completely removed.

But as the team stopped for lunch and the tide came back in, they had a call on the VHF to say the boat had started to move and that the scaffolding work platforms were at risk. As the team scrambled back to the boat they discovered that the tide was higher than expected and the boat had moved 3m, but was still secure.

"On this tide the swell was more aggressive than before and the spring tide slightly higher," recalled Cox. "The fin had



R Deppe/VOR

▲ Above and left: Team Vestas Wind is lifted aboard the container ship, *Julia S*, ready for shipment to Malaysia

come out from under the rock and the boat had started to shift very slightly, further up the reef towards the scaffolding towers. Fortunately, we had enough rope and additional anchors to hold the boat steady.”

Floating the hull

With around two hours either side of low tide available, the pace of the salvage operation took a step up as the team prepared to finish the cut on the keel, remove the rig and ballast the hull ready for the next high tide. Unfortunately, this meant floating her off during the night.

“We set up the lines from the anchors to the pit and primary winches in order to allow us to manoeuvre her as she floated,” said Cox. “At times there were three to four knots of tide sweeping over the reef which meant we couldn’t risk losing control of the boat. In addition there was the risk of getting her caught as we moved her through the reef.”

The night move to safer waters was successful and the following morning the boat was prepared to be moved out into the lagoon to the mothership.

The 1,600kg keel fin was recovered by floating it off the reef and across the lagoon on a raft built by suspending planks across two 18ft fishing dories.

The rig, however, didn’t fare so well.

“Unfortunately, we could not salvage the rig in one piece,” said Cox. “We recovered as much as we possibly could.”

Having successfully moved the yacht to the mothership, the team prepared to ballast her so she could be hoisted onto the *Julia S*.

But getting the container ship close to the reef was another issue. With chart accuracy uncertain, the captain was

concerned about the approach. Fortunately the skipper of the mothership, Roger Addison, a former Mauritian pilot, was able to give them sufficient reassurance.

With Team Vestas aboard, the *Julia S* sailed to Port Klang, Malaysia where Vestas was lifted and shipped to Genoa, Italy. From there she would travel by road to Persico Marine in Bergamo where the boat will be rebuilt over the next few months.

Meanwhile, the team dropped navigator Wouter Verbraak from the crew. Skipper Chris Nicholson and the other members of the crew have been retained, to help with the rebuild of the yacht and return to the race.

COMMENT MATTHEW SHEAHAN



Team Vestas Wind’s new goal is to focus on the two short legs from Lisbon to the finish in Göteborg. This is no longer about winning – that possibility vanished when the boat hit the reef – but the benefits of a remarkable turnaround of events.

For a sponsor whose wind power business is based on clean and green credentials, recovering the Volvo 65 from a sensitive area has been especially important. Getting back into the race before the finish in June is the icing on the cake, but it also says

much about the new-style Volvo Ocean Race.

Social and environmental responsibility is an essential aspect of any modern racing campaign and, while most of us understand and agree that our sailing world should minimise its impact, this doesn’t often make for a very stimulating story.

But for Vestas and Volvo, out of disaster has come a fascinating story underlining both the robust nature of the new one-design boats and their sustainability.

WATCHING BRIEF

What the *Yachting World* crew have been watching, reading or laughing at this month



Speed skating

All aboard ‘The Deuce’, at 54ft the largest and fastest ice yacht in the world, beautifully restored, adorned in titanium and not for the faint-hearted. [Google ‘Deuce 54ft YouTube’](#)



Foil wrapped

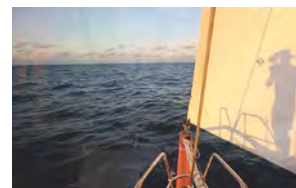
Epic artistic (and dramatic) video of the foiling GC32s at Key West Race Week. [vimeo.com/117864320](#)



Flying again

Catch our first-look video of the new bright yellow Dragonfly 25, the first family multihull designed to fly two hulls!

[See Yachting World’s YouTube channel](#)



In the mood

A beautiful and evocative VOR video by Amory Ross that captures the deep serenity of ocean sailing as well as the excitement. [Google ‘The essence of sailing’](#)

J Class yachts return to race in the UK

At least three of the glorious J Class yachts will be coming to the UK this summer to race, providing a spectacular centrepiece to the Royal Yacht Squadron Bicentenary Regatta in July.

Lionheart, *Ranger* and *Velsheda* will be racing in the regatta from 27-31 July. They will be shipped to the Solent, arriving around 20 July and will be moored in Ocean Village, Southampton.

The racing will be on round the cans courses in the Solent, but there is also expected to be a clockwise lap of the Isle of Wight, providing a memorable sight for spectators. Close, competitive racing is a signature of the J Class racing. Although last year *Lionheart* dominated, the fleet had some of the closest action in its history, and is experiencing a revival that may even eclipse the class's heyday in the 1930s.

To help follow every move of the Js, the fleet will have live tracking, which can be viewed at www.jclassyachts.com. We'll also be covering the regatta and previewing it at yachtingworld.com



Walking the line

This is Austrian climber Mich Kemeter performing one of his most difficult stunts: a 22m slackline walk between the masts of two Volvo Ocean Race yachts, *Alvimedia* and *Team SCA*, moored in Abu Dhabi at the end of Leg 2.

The two boats were carefully anchored and the line rigged 27m up in the air, but despite being a calm day the boats were moving slightly.

Kemeter was taking on a 'Walk the Line' challenge sponsored by Red Bull and due to be shown this spring on redbull.tv



A Sanchez/VOR



J Brockway

Ainslie 'rescued' off Sir Richard Branson's island

Sir Ben Ainslie and his new wife, Georgie Thompson, whom he married at Hampton Court Palace at Christmas, celebrated part of their honeymoon at Sir Richard Branson's Necker Island in the British Virgin Islands. Sir Ben and his wife were sailing his Truly Classic 65, *Rita*, two-handed when the mainsail furling jammed off the island and he called for help.

He explained that he needed assistance to go aloft to fix the problem and radioed for

help. Some people from the watersports centre at Necker came on board. Ashore, the couple celebrated with Branson.

But was there even more to the rendezvous than meets the eye? The *Daily Telegraph* reported in January that Branson's Virgin Group was contemplating backing the BAR America's Cup campaign. And Ainslie and Branson have known each other since a transatlantic attempt they did together in 2008.

I Roman



John Payne Photo

Rambler 88 – a missile in the making?

This has to be one of the coolest-looking racing yachts ever. The out-and-out racing missile *Rambler 88* is the second of two of the world's fastest monohulls to launch in one season from the north-east coast of the US. After Dr Jim Clark's 100-footer *Comanche* was unveiled at Hodgdon in Maine in the autumn, now comes George David's latest *Rambler*, an 88-footer designed by Juan Koujoumdjian and built at New England Boatworks, RI.

Like *Comanche* (see page 34), *Rambler 88*'s shape is taken to modern excess: low, wide, chined, flat, super-light and ultra-powerful. But the size of the yacht is a little surprising. Big racing boat owners tend to favour either the highly competitive mini-maxi circuit (up to 72ft) or the super-maxi 100-footers (max length). So what is *Rambler 88* for: to win on the water, on ratings, or to set records?

"The goal is to win line honours, which we believe will happen in most conditions," says Philippe Oulhen from Juan Yacht Design.

David's previous boat was *Rambler 100*, a 100-footer, also by Koujoumdjian, which lost her keel and capsized during the 2011 Fastnet Race. Oulhen says: "The 100-footers are designed for record attempts. The big difference there is that you pick the weather, so they are very powerful for specific conditions. But when racing you have to deal with what you get. So this boat is for racing and winning line honours, not records. And while everyone else is heading for max waterline, so we will win on ratings too."



NEB Photos

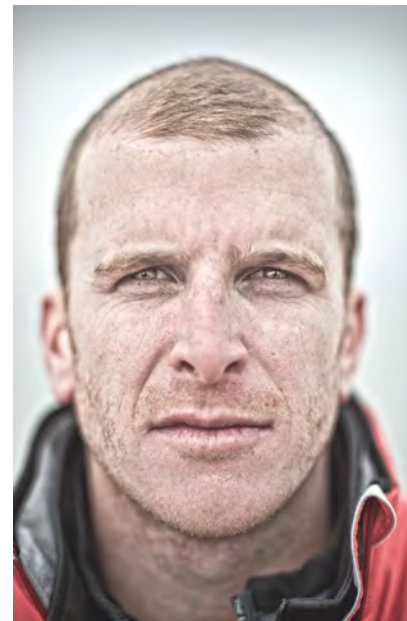
Rambler 88 features some radical features, including full-length chines and hull-deck chamfers, very long twin daggerboards with tapered top ends and rudders with teeth or 'tubercles' on the trailing edge. This latter feature means the rudders should not stall when the boat is sailed at hotter angles.

"We're targeting the Rolex Transatlantic Race, but the RORC Caribbean 600 and Les Voiles de Saint Barths are right up there," says owner George David.

It looks unlikely that *Comanche* will make the RORC 600, so the first time these two new radical US racers go head to head will probably be the transatlantic race in late June. So this could be the year when monohull records tumble again.

See the launch video here: <http://vimeo.com/116788642>

▲ Above: new Juan Koujoumdjian-designed 88ft *Rambler 88*, chasing line honours



Red-Photographic/Clipper Race

Clipper skipper wins seamanship award

An incredible mid-ocean recovery of a man overboard during the 2013/14 Clipper Race has earned skipper Sean McCarter the Cruising Club of America's prestigious Rod Stephens Seamanship Award. The trophy is given 'for an act of seamanship which significantly contributes to the safety of a yacht or one or more individuals at sea.'

McCarter was skippering the 70ft one-design *Derry-Londonderry-Doire* on a leg across the north Pacific from Qingdao in China to San Francisco when crewmember Andrew Taylor was washed overboard during a headsail change on the foredeck.

Taylor was found after nearly one hour and forty minutes in very rough, cold water. Taylor had on him a personal AIS beacon, but it was only after some time in the water that he realised it had not properly activated. Meanwhile, McCarter and his crew carried out a well-drilled search in 35-knot winds and seas of 4-6m.

"A needle in a haystack doesn't even describe what we were looking for," McCarter says. "Andrew's beacon then explained it – he was drifting at up to four knots where we had been expecting him to be doing one to two knots max."

Having re-established a visual at 400m, the crew recovered Taylor.

Previous winners of the trophy include Jean-Pierre Dick for sailing the final 2,650 miles of the 2012/3 Vendée Globe without a keel, and Mike Golding for his 2006 rescue of Alex Thomson in the Southern Ocean when Thomson's keel canting mechanism broke.



Winter's peak

These great photos were sent to us by French scientist and polar explorer Eric Brossier, who is overwintering on his yacht, *Vagabond*, at Qikiqtarjuaq, Baffin Island with his partner, France Pinczon du Sel, and their two daughters, Aurore (5) and Léonie (7).

Brossier and his family saw their first sunrise of 2015 on 16 January and the same night a wonderful aurora borealis display. It's a dark and cold existence. 'By mid-January, we have about six hours of daylight, but only one minute of sun!' reports Brossier. 'Then, it is dark, and the sky is clear, and we can often watch northern lights dancing in the sky.' vagabond.fr



Photos: Brossier

Düsseldorf boat show

Boot Düsseldorf, the world's largest boat show, got the year off to a buoyant start in January with a large number of new launches across a wide range of sizes and styles. Over 80,000 people visited the show, which runs in 17 different halls and has built an unassailable reputation as a must-visit exhibition for anyone seriously considering buying a new yacht – or anything else attached to watersports.

This year's new stars included the Solaris 50, the Maxi 1200, Discovery 58 bluewater cruiser and a new departure for Grand Soleil, a striking and smart new cruising design, the LC46. But this is also the show at which to see real diversity, with all manner of lesser-known species to be sighted, from daysailers and weekenders to



multihulls such as the new Dragonfly 25.

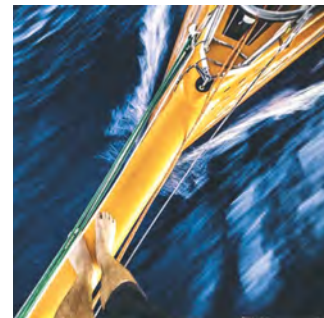
The *Yachting World* team was there and will be reporting in the next few months on our pick of the new boats, but you can see some of our video walkthroughs on *Yachting World's* YouTube channel.



Messe Düsseldorf/C. Tilmann

MOST RETWEETED

@yachtingworld



Beautiful shot. Riding the calms on @TeamAlvimedica by on board reporter Amory Ross



Even the bare hull makes the skin prickle. New J Class Svea in build in Netherlands



One to put on your wishlist: the new Pogo 36 due in 2016. This model was at the Düsseldorf show @matthewsheahan



The 121ft superyacht *Pumula* cruising in Antarctica, from @DykstraNA and @Royal_Huisman

Foiler for club sailors

Foiling for the ordinary sailor came a step closer at the CWM FX London Boat Show with the production of the first Solent Whisper 19ft foiling dinghy catamaran.

"If you can sail an RS200, you can sail this foiling cat," announced designer Ron Price, who is also one of Southampton Solent University's senior lecturers in naval architecture.

Impressed by the design of the cat and its T-foils, dinghy cat builder White Formula has taken on the production of this all-carbon cat, which will have a price tag of £19,500 inc VAT.

Fundamentally different from the more typical J type foils as seen on the Flying Phantom, Nacra 20 and AC boats, the Solent Whisper has a set of T foils, similar to those used on foiling Moths, which Price believes ensures a far more stable and reliable ride.

"You simply cannot pitchpole this boat," he declares.



onEdition



Jeff Brown

▲ **Above:** the 111ft Dubois-designed *Silvertip* has company on the last day of racing for the NZ Millennium Cup. Held in New Zealand's Bay of Islands, this superyacht regatta took place over three days in January. *Silvertip* finished the event in joint 2nd place, but the winner was the 164ft Perini Navi *Silencio*. www.nzmarine.com

IN BRIEF

AC World Series

The 2015 America's Cup World Series will be held in Cagliari, Italy, from 4-7 June. This is the first of several venues in which the wingmasted AC45s from the last America's Cup will race, but this time upgraded to compete on foils.

All six teams entered in the 35th America's Cup will be taking part: the defender, Oracle Team USA, and the five challengers, Artemis Racing (SWE), Ben Ainslie Racing (GBR), Emirates Team New Zealand (NZL), Luna Rossa Challenge (ITA) and Team France (FRA).

An additional team from Asia is also expected. Dates are:

23-16 July: Portsmouth, UK

28-30 August: Gothenberg, Sweden

16-18 October: Bermuda

Bart's Bash record

Confirmation that Bart's Bash, the worldwide sailing event held by the Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation on 21 September 2014, made a Guinness World Record. Over 16,000 boats in 60 countries took to the water, raising £366,391.95 for the Foundation.

Next Bash on 20 September 2015.



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YACHTS

Sir Robin wins top award – again

In a storied history of sailing still in the making, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston has been awarded the Yachting Journalists' Association Yachtsman of the Year award for the fourth time.

The award, sponsored by online brokerage boats.com, recognised Sir Robin's solo transatlantic race in the Route du Rhum in November, in which he finished 3rd in class in his Open 60, *Grey Power*.

Sir Robin, 75, first won Yachtsman of the Year in 1969 for the feat that made him a national hero: winning the Golden Globe Race and becoming the first person to sail non-stop single-handed round the world. He won it again in 1994 jointly with Peter Blake for their record-breaking 74-day round the world record in the catamaran *ENZA New Zealand*, and for the third time in 2007 when he completed the solo Velux 5 Oceans round the world race in this same Open 60.

Only Sir Ben Ainslie has equalled the number of Yachtsman of the Year awards.

A special award was made to Iain Percy for his achievements in setting up Bart's Bash last September, the biggest yacht race in history, raising money for the Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation.



Sir Robin Knox-Johnston accepts the YJA Yachtsman of the Year award at the London Boat Show

You can read a report of Sir Robin's Route du Rhum race, and a profile of the steely determination that drives him, online at yachtingworld.com

Warren Brown 1929-2014

Warren Brown, one of Bermuda's most influential sailors, has died aged 85. A veteran of 20 Newport Bermuda races, Brown covered more than 300,000 miles, competing in the Admiral's Cup at Cowes, SORC events in Florida, Middle Sea Race and Marion to Bermuda race, and cruised to all corners of the globe. He also represented Bermuda at the 1972 Olympic regatta in Kiel and managed the Bermudian team at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

In 1988, the Cruising Club of America awarded him its Blue Water Medal for his adventurous exploits first to the Arctic and then down the Atlantic to South Georgia, the Chilean fjords, Antarctica and on round the world.

He owned a series of yachts named *War Baby*, the first being an International One Design in which he won the King Edward VII Gold Cup for match racing in 1960.

In 1964, Brown co-founded the Onion Patch Series, a three-boat team event modelled on Britain's Admiral's Cup. It was after representing Bermuda in the first event that he was caught in Hurricane Cleo while crossing the Gulf Stream during the delivery trip back to Newport. It was a measure of Brown's great seamanship that he and his crew survived 85-knot winds unscathed.

Brown's first experience of the sea, however, could so easily have been his last. As a three-month-old, born

Brown's 61ft S&S-designed *War Baby*, ex-*Tenacious*, in which he cruised extensively, as well as raced



Photos: PPL

prematurely in America, he and his mother were returning to Bermuda aboard the steam cruise ship *RMS Fort Victoria*, when she was rammed in fog by the *SS Algonquin*. Mercifully, the two were rescued along with 269 passengers and 165 crew before the ship sank.

Brown's lasting legacy is the Warren Brown Scholarship Fund, which he set up to help provide opportunities for disadvantaged youngsters.

NEXT MONTH

On sale 12 March



Man overboard

In Part 7 of our Bluewater Sailing Series, Dan Bower looks at the tricky issue of recovering a man overboard if you're sailing downwind under spinnaker

World ARC in Columbia

The World ARC made its first visit to the emerging cruising destination of Columbia in January. Toby Hodges caught up with the crews in the cultural haven of Santa Marta

Vestas: what went wrong?

We detail the findings of the official report into the grounding of Volvo boat *Team Vestas Wind* and what we can all learn from it

On test: Moody 54DS

So voluminous is this Moody that it merges the worlds of monohull, multihull and motor yacht. Toby Hodges puts her comfort to the test in sub-zero Baltic conditions

On the River Plate

On the border between Uruguay and Argentina, the River Plate has some fascinating cruising and some idiosyncratic weather conditions, finds Jill Schinas





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A Blackwell

Uncommon sense

Skip Novak says 'bring it on' in respect of PFDs (personal flotation devices) in his Soundings column in December 2014. He says the use of PFDs is a matter of 'common sense'. I must disagree.

The common sense is to use them at all times, even in the bath tub. What Skip is asking for is the utilisation of 'uncommon sense', which is becoming more and more rare in this world.

I wish him well, but sadly he is becoming a dinosaur in the land of media control of thought processes and conformity to the Nanny State wherein none of us is responsible for anything.

No fault in life is what is being sold. Like Skip, I am not buying.

David Burn
Toronto, Canada

Brush-by with whales

Having read your article on whale encounters (*Yachting World*, January 2015), I thought that you may want to make note of these encounters as logged by me, each about 400nm east of the Azores heading towards northern Spain, wind Force 3/4, sea slight, sunnyish day, easy sailing, boat speed around five knots.

1. June 2004, sailing single-handed, 33ft Wauquiez Gladiateur, light blue antifouled hull. Log reads:

'When I first heard the exhalation of the whale, it was to leeward and sounded quite close. It was close, about 40m away.

'The whale was moving closer and was certainly longer than the boat. Its tail could be seen quite clearly and the bow wave from its head seemed to impart a worrying deliberation to get closer. I felt the boat move – not a lurch, but a gentle movement

sideways from the displaced water as the whale moved ahead of the bow to appear on the starboard side almost below the tumblehome. Then we were pushed, not much, but there was contact. You can't call starboard on a whale, so I switched on the engine and the echo-sounder.

'Whatever the whale had thought we were, maybe a rival suitor or a predator on its young, we were a threat no more. Our vocal response had changed our sonar signature. The whale moved off.'

2. July 2008, again single-handed, 40ft Gib'Sea 402 *Morgan Le Fay*, dark blue antifouled hull. In the log:

'Suddenly I had company. More than I wanted. The first whale to exhale and show its presence was no more than 30m away on the port side. The second whale was about 25m away and moving determinedly towards us. The third was on the starboard side about 20m away.

'There were probably another seven or eight as closely grouped ahead and astern. *Morgan Le Fay* was in the middle.

'These were fin whales, huge leviathans over 15m long, capable of damage, capable of capsizing a yacht. Each individual animal was heavier than my yacht.

'These animals, probably peaceful, can be clumsy in their curiosity. But were they being defensive? Did they know that we were a yacht and meant no harm? Or were we perceived as a threat?

'I switched on the engine and the echo-sounder and hoped they would go away. They did.'

My reaction to the first encounter was slight worry; my reaction to the second was considerable concern.

Allan Collison
SY *Morgan Le Fay*

▲ **Above: meeting a whale at sea is both a thrilling and a terrifying experience**

HAVE YOUR SAY:
Follow us on Facebook and on Twitter @yachtingworld for our take on the unfolding news, and let us know your views.

KEEL DEBATE

We ran a major investigation online at yachtingworld.com this month into keel failures and their causes. These are a few of your comments. Have your say by joining the debate online at bit.ly/1Lkqynd

The technology exists to analyse stresses caused by hitting a rock at speed and to calculate the fatigue damage over a chosen life, say ten years for an out and out racer and 40 years for a cruising boat. Then to design the hull structure, keel bolts and keel for those conditions.

The reason we don't sail long keel boats with skeg-hung rudders is that they are slower and more expensive than the oversize dinghies we do sail.

Bluebeard

Maintenance is key. I look after racing yachts with the high aspect ratio fins. We race the boats hard and it is inevitable that we have grounded at high speed. After this I have taken steps to have the keel inspected, keel bolts torqued and in some cases ultrasounded. I have never had any trouble except for one bad grounding, but we took the full maintenance steps and the boat is still racing hard now.

John Squire

My personal feeling is that as costs have become an issue and manufacturing to specifications and tolerances better, the margin of error has gone down. What was once protected by slapping on an extra layer or two of fibre, which might have weighed a bit more and been a bit slower, but was just a harder wearing boat that would last 30 years, has now gone to thinner material that wears much faster.

Spokane

I have a First 36.7 which we've sailed for over ten years and we've hit the bottom hard on more than one occasion. We thought about selling it a few years ago and, to my embarrassment, when the broker lifted the floor, there were a load of cracks. We had it fixed. The thing is the floors are screwed down and we should have looked, but we hadn't.

Tim Pyne



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Matthew Sheahan

A fossil fuel-free voyage by a crew of molecular biologists provides a fascinating view not only of 'green' technology, but also of onboard in-jokes



After a fortnight at sea crews can sound a little odd as they step out of their private world onto the pontoon. The onboard banter that develops during a long ocean passage rarely makes sense to anyone else. Having been there myself, I was aware of this as I struck up conversations with some of the skippers and crews at the end of last year's Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC).

But when one skipper started talking about "knowing when Molly, our sea cow, needed milking" it was difficult not to raise an eyebrow. Had their large cockpit

bimini lulled them into a false sense of solar security and encouraged them not to wear hats? Perhaps it was something in the water. Or had the trip across been so fractious that the crew had gone into self-imposed solitary confinement during their off-watch spells?

Konrad Balser's fossil fuel-free Hanse 470e *Kymothoe* was not what I had expected of a totally 'green' yacht. She looked perfectly normal; so normal, in

fact, that I thought I had come to the wrong place. Yet this was precisely what made his story so interesting.

Balser, who has had his Hanse for seven years, is a Swiss scientist specialising in molecular biology – as were his three crew – so perhaps it wasn't surprising that, for his preparation for the ARC, he had taken an analytical approach to planning and had trawled through articles and reports on the subject of power.

"I was struck by the number of problems people had had with their generators, which made me wonder how easy it would be to cross the Atlantic without using fossil fuels," he said. "Having decided it was possible, I set about modifying the boat during the 2013/14 winter and did most of the work myself."

His installation involved a pair of hydro-electric Watt & Sea generators, with an array of solar panels.

While there is nothing new in hydro generators, which Balser said provided around 15-20 amps, it was the solar panels that caught my eye. Consisting of 4.5m² of flexible panels attached to the top of the coachroof, these were particularly clever; not only were the near-flush-fitting panels very unobtrusive, but they had been designed to be easily removed, unplugged and stowed under berth cushions below.

"The panels themselves are made by Solbian and we had them mounted on a fabric base by Asseaboat. This makes them easy to fit and means that we only put the panels out when we need them," explained Balser. "Using the two systems, we made the crossing easily without using the engine once."

Had he made sacrifices elsewhere to save on power? "No, not at all. We run a refrigerator and a watermaker and we used the autopilot for much of the trip. For hot water we took the water from the watermaker on deck in containers for it to heat up for washing and showers, leaving our two 200lt water tanks for drinking and cooking.

"One of the key issues, though, is power management," he continued. "Solar panels don't generate as much power as the hydro generators and obviously they don't work at night, but they were very good for charging our main 810ah battery bank. The hydro generators produce around twice as much power as the solar panels so you have to be more careful as you need to use some of that power."

And where does Molly come in? "When they are producing too much power you can hear the note change, which to us sounded like Molly asking to be milked – which we did by turning on a light or two."

Possibly not what most farmers would classify as milking, but like the rest of the boat, an impressively simple approach that made perfect sense to the crew, as it should to the rest of us – eventually.

Twitter: @matthewsheahan

■ When one skipper started talking about 'knowing when Molly, our sea cow, needed milking' it was difficult not to raise an eyebrow. Perhaps it was something in the water ■

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Skip Novak

There's nothing like a good debate around the saloon table on a stormy night, but computer access to facts is threatening the fun



I've weathered many a storm down south, offshore, inshore and at anchor. The latter is always the preferred location given a choice. With lines to the rocks or trees, well-secured with wind whistling through the rigging and no need of an anchor watch, it should be an enjoyable, if not an inspiring experience.

During lengthy periods hunkered down, when not reading from our extensive library or writing in our journals, we defaulted to the art of conversation at the saloon table, usually over a bowl of popcorn and a bottle. Lively debates evolving into full-blown arguments were common.

Obscure topics left open to conjecture could be the distance from the sun to Neptune, the politics of Nepal or, more likely, Wales; why and how the National Health Service was failing, or the merits of Shackleton versus Scott. Some questions, such as when did Captain Alan first make an appearance in the *Tintin* series, were easily answered as we had the entire collection on board. *Bowditch*,

the American Practical Navigator was also a mine of information to settle nautical questions.

But many discussions festered on, sometimes for days, argued by half truths, assumptions or pure bluffing – much to the amusement of the spectators who were loosely involved.

This banter fundamentally changed when my mate Hamish, a computer guru still arguing the merits of DOS long after Windows made an appearance, came on board with an Encarta Encyclopedia dongle. It must have been around 1995. I will never forget when Julian and Matt were hotly debating the chemical methodology of distillation – a fine topic indeed – Hamish smugly plugged in the Encarta dongle and

proceeded to read out nine pages of text to settle the argument of how, in fact, it all worked.

He thrust his hand into the bowl of popcorn to signal the end of the speech. We had just heard the bald truth, and the truth was ugly. An awkward silence ensued as we all came to realise what had just happened.

From that point forward we tended to stay away from argument that could easily be solved by accessible fact and instead invented conundrums to ponder over. In spite of this, as the Nineties closed out, more and more computers started to come aboard and with them an inverse proportion of philosophical discussion around the table.

A further devolution of social interaction occurred from around 2005 when digital photography became well established. On a once-in-a-lifetime cruise to Antarctica recording the images was paramount and if digital gear was not to be trusted theretofore – the oven was used to cook out the moisture from many of the earlier models – by then it was the norm. Formerly, with print and slide film, there was nothing to do but reload for tomorrow and clean the lens.

Now, after a long day out of doors, we would all retreat to the main saloon for a cocktail, but instead of settling down in conversation, editing pictures had taken over the table, hardly leaving room for the hors d'oeuvres and drinks, the settee a tangle of cables, chargers and hard drives, as we all struggled to download, back up and edit out the rubbish – in the thousands per day.

I am happy to report, however, that technology has finally triumphed and made this digital filing so efficient and generally foolproof that time and space has once again been created and we are slowly relearning the attractions of debate.

On our last trip this August, it was back to Scott versus Amundsen to the South Pole, and Shackleton came out on top as the supreme leader of men in polar travel. Argued more by emotion than by the facts we had to hand, I felt I had come full circle back to the joys of 26 years ago on that first voyage south.

■ Hamish smugly plugged in the Encarta dongle and read out nine pages of text to settle the argument. We had just heard the bald truth, and the truth was ugly ■

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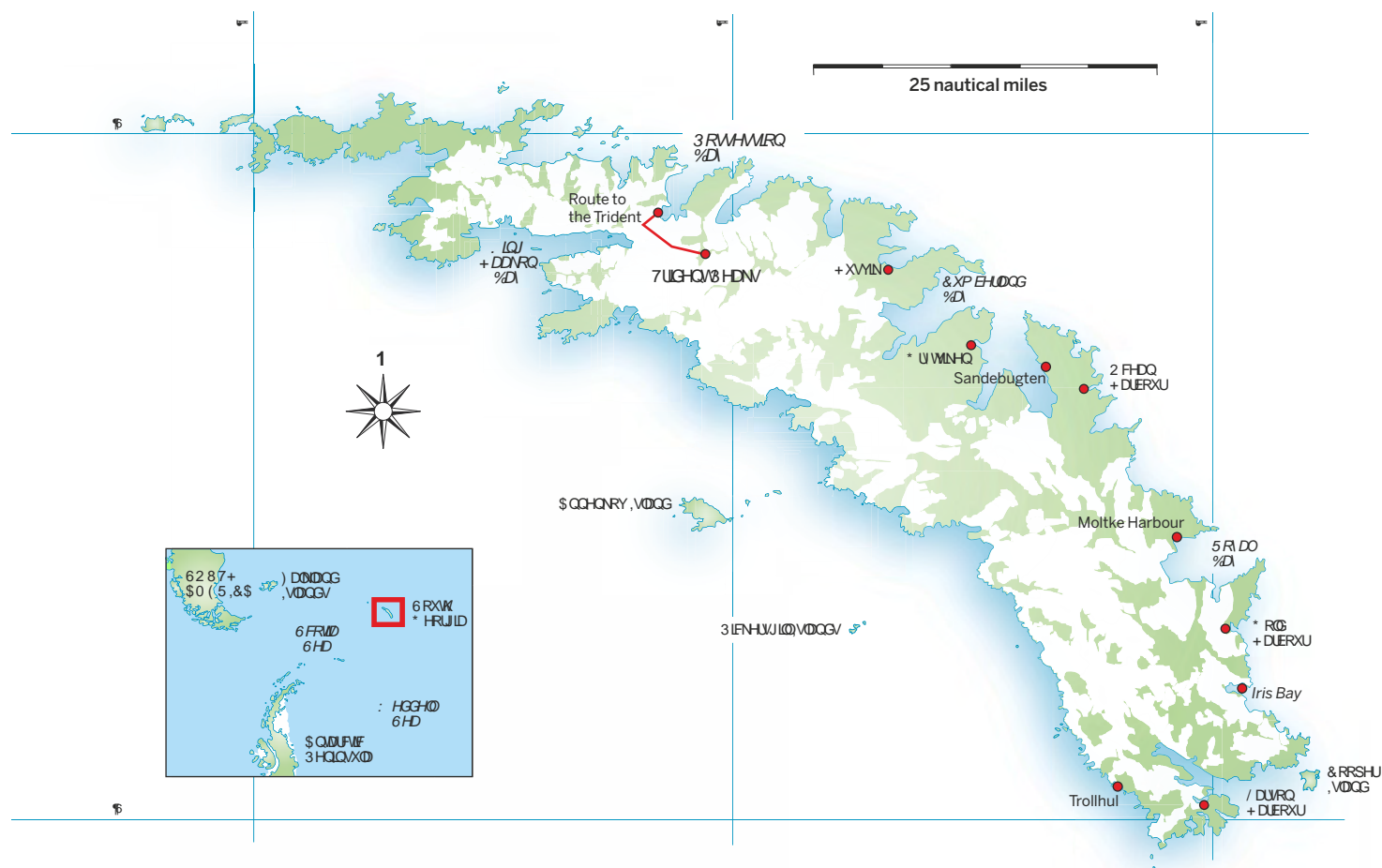
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Southern • winter

A winter voyage to climb in South Georgia had seemed a great idea to Skip Novak on *Pelagic Australis*. But now ice was accumulating on deck



SOUTH GEORGIA



No matter how well you think you have prepared for a voyage, there are always things that slip through the net. Usually they are minor items that didn't make the final hitlist as preoccupied minds were concentrating on the big picture. On this occasion, halfway to South Georgia from the Falklands Islands, and having crossed the Polar Front, we were lacking an armoury of wooden mallets and rubber hammers. We only had one. And a 50kg bag of rock salt would not have gone amiss either.

Southern winter, 19 August, and we were sailing on a broad reach in 30 knots true, an established south-westerly airstream sweeping up from the Antarctic. What appeared to be a stationary high well away to the west was blocking the usual depressions marching through this part of the Southern Ocean – ideal sailing conditions for us really, and the temperatures hovering between 4° and 7° of frost would not have otherwise been an issue. But even a light sea spray coming over the beam was causing substantial accumulation of ice on deck and up to three metres on the rig.

It was soon apparent that our choice of a very conservative sail plan – three reefs in the mainsail and our storm staysail – was the right one. Well, choices from that point on were moot, as the furling drum on the staysail was already the size of a frozen beach ball and the main halyard and reef lines were caked in centimetres of rime. Even with buckets of brine – if we'd had that 50kg of rock salt, which we didn't – it would have been a mission to keep the running gear clear.



We were committed, but confident in the GRIB files that we would see less wind as we approached the island, not more, and the sail plan, frozen in place, was good for more or less 50 knots of breeze.

For the second time that afternoon, now with the winter sun set and a moonless night in the offing, I armed myself with my coveted rubber hammer, wisely slung around my neck with a sail tie. I ventured onto the foredeck more or less on all fours, for another session in anger management, taking it out on what must have been a ton of ice decorating the pulpit, lifelines, furlers, sails and rigging.

It was not a crisis by any means and the audience in the doghouse amused themselves at my expense (they would all have some outdoor fun later), but it was noteworthy how quickly the ice grew even in this off the wind condition.

We had many blunt instruments on board – winch handles, axes, crowbars, metal pipes and more – but I was holding these back to mitigate any damage to the fabric of the boat by the overzealous. By the time I cleared the pulpit and started working aft on lifelines and rigging, the pulpit had already been seeded with another layer of the white stuff.

There is no doubt that a few of us who knew better were contemplating what it would have been like in an upwind, head sea condition.

The British climber Stephen Venables and I hatched the idea of this mid-winter climbing trip while on a previous voyage to the Antarctic Peninsula in 2013. We had co-led two Shackleton Traverses in previous seasons, so were keen to do some climbing elsewhere on

All photos: S Novak



▲ Clockwise from above: it was extraordinary how quickly ice accumulated on sails, guardwires, running and standing rigging; butchering the mutton on arrival in South Georgia; freeing the windlass



SOUTH GEORGIA



▲ Above: the best place to be was inside the pilothouse of *Pelagic Australis*

the island and we worked under the presumption that if October was a good month, well then August and September would be even better.

This theory was conveniently backed up by former South Georgia resident Tim Carr of *Curlew* fame who, with his wife, Pauline, had spent 14 years on the island. Likewise, SG lifer Pat Lurcock, perennial harbour master during the winter fisheries season, also claimed that August into September was the time to be there. The difference, though, was that they were based on the island so did not face the hurdle of actually getting there at this time of year.

Annually, our first trip of the season to South Georgia is early October during the very beginning of spring. Temperatures are on the rise, but snow cover is usually still fast on the shore, making forays by ski and sled into the interior relatively soft starts. Colder than high summer, skiing and pulling conditions are optimum and generally the weather is more stable, with the tracks of the big lows often moving north of the island, resulting in less wind speed and longer

periods of calm, sometimes measured in days rather than hours as is the case in high summer.

Then, too, we are more or less alone on the island well before the cruise ships arrive. However, it must never be

forgotten that South Georgia is arguably one of the most inaccessible of sailing destinations, given its position and climate, which can only be described as harsh. It has no air-strip and there is no organised SAR facility whatsoever. You really are on your own, where self-rescue is the only rescue.

Who was crazy enough to join us for such a venture? Well, four of our team from 2013. Joined by another four, who would stay with the vessel while we camped ashore for 12-14 days – an ideal scenario to manage all expectations.

On day four out of Port Stanley in the Falklands we made landfall on the north-western tip of the island with the

breeze on the way down, enjoying a spectacular sunrise over the spine of the island. Motoring down the coast, the job at hand was chipping out and melting back with buckets of hot seawater – which included painstakingly removing three centimetres of ice on the entire deck – a task not as satisfying as easily knocking curtains off the lifelines and sheets!

By nightfall, we dropped anchor in a safe bolt hole in front of the abandoned whaling station at Husvik in Stromness Bay. The atmosphere was, to say the least, sombre near this Norwegian ghost town as we took a walk ashore, step-plugging in deep snow to a raised vantage point as the light fell. The cabin lights on *Pelagic Australis* soon were illuminated, beckoning us back on board for a celebratory bottle or two of red with the

leg of mutton off the backstay. We had arrived on the island.

The following day we wasted no time in making our way further south. The plan was to disembark six of us for up to two weeks at Trollhul Bay on the south-west coast. From there we would ski two days inland to a plateau with a half dozen unclimbed summits to choose from. While we were away, the eight left on board would tour the north coast, making ski and snowshoe day trips, led by our Arctic survival expert Thomas Geipel.

It is uncanny and defies explanation that, while working your way up or down the coast of South Georgia, typically after rounding each headland, the wind changes 180°, so a slog into short chop is inevitable at some point. One thing was clear, though, the farther we moved south, the darker the clouds became over the high ground.

We made it to Moltke Harbour in Royal Bay by early evening and skipper Dave Roberts wisely decided to take shelter, a relative term at Moltke as it is very open with strong winds usually funnelling down Whale Valley, what we call a 'blower bay'. Good holding in sand and mud is usually the case, but for reasons I won't go into, we had immense problems getting stuck in.

This was then compounded by a failed windlass motor. So there we were, in the dark, putting Skip Novak's *Storm Sailing Techniques*, Part 10 into action with all hands manually pulling in 80m of anchor chain with chain hooks and the coffee grinder in gusts of 60 knots. A jovial bunch we had and they did not lose time reminding me of my own sage advice to readers, even producing a copy of *Yachting World* to rub it in! A man of lesser character could have had a sense of humour failure...

The next day, moving further south still, it was becoming apparent that our original plan for the mountains, concocted from the comfort of Venables's kitchen in Bath a year ago, was looking suspect. What had been a steady and optimum wind direction for the passage across from the Falklands began to backfire on our climbing plans.

The stationary high to the west was now over the Falklands, squeezing the isobars to the east even more. ▶

■ South Georgia is arguably one of the most inaccessible of sailing destinations given its harsh climate ■

► This photo: the climbing party makes its way up the Trident Mid Peak



◄ Clockwise from left: building a snow wall at Murray Camp after the Shackleton Gap; Rodrigo Jordan snug in the tent; an outlier of Mid Peak in a gloriously calm moment



SOUTH GEORGIA



▲ Above: Skip and Rodrigo hanging out and hanging on

The strong south-west flow made nipping around the corner to land at Trollhul a non-starter as the bay is open to swell. We looked into Iris Bay on the south-east coast, but it was blowing a full gale down the glacier and getting across a shallow moraine into the inner bay to land was problematic with williwaws hammering us one after the other. Moreover, the glacier, steep with bare ice on the lower sections, looked decidedly uninviting.

The default was to launch from Larsen Harbour, a good anchorage right at the southern tip of the island and an initial glacial approach that both Venables and I were familiar with. After a day's preparation on board we began ferrying loads ashore, a long dinghy ride to the snout of the glacier. Still blowing a strong gale at sea, the conditions were dramatically magnified in the fjord, with katabatic winds making

pulling the pulks up the steepish ground extremely taxing.

After the better part of a day, we had most, but not all of our gear at only 250m. It was another 300m to the Philippi Glacier, which gave access to

easier terrain into the interior. The slope was also becoming wind-slabbed with the added risk of avalanche.

The next day relentless strong winds made moving impossible. With a five-day forecast of more of the same, we

made the decision to throw in the towel with deference to the shore team on board, as they too had their agenda.

We stopped at Gold Harbour to sample the wildlife – a spectacular, inedible menu of king penguins, gentoo penguins, fur and elephant seals, South Georgia pintails and predatory skuas and giant petrels. A day later from Ocean Harbour the climbing team summited on Black Peak on the Szielasko Glacier, while the shore team skied and snowshoed across the Barff Peninsula to Cumberland East Bay.

On a glorious day out, windless with a deep blue sky and crunchy snow underfoot and ski, we all reconvened in Sandebugten, before docking at Grytviken where we officially checked in. More skiing and climbing followed for the next few days in and around Grytviken.

After toasting Shackleton at his grave site, it was on to Plan B for the climbers. We had eight days, so we hatched a scheme to ski from Possession Bay up the Murray and Briggs Glaciers and attempt to climb the three unclimbed and unnamed peaks of the Trident Range just south of the famous Shackleton Traverse.

Anchoring in the bottom of the bay, not far from where Captain Cook first landed on the island in 1775, we claimed our own bit of territory by caching our equipment near an erratic boulder on the edge of a moraine. Working in high winds was made more difficult by a tricky kelp-bound dinghy landing. Nothing seemed to be going easy for us!

Next day was equally savage. Spindrift cascaded down from the Shackleton Gap, a broad, low-slung col separating Possession Bay from King Haakon Bay where Shackleton's *James Caird* landed in 1916. We were running out of available

days, so we had to get started. Getting kitted up at 0700 in -8°C in a gale took some willpower and we set out against the headwind with gusts strong enough to knock us

off our feet. Five hours later we were on the Murray Glacier out of the main airstream, built a snow wall shoulder high and managed to erect the two three-man tents, before finally settling down for the night.

The next day all toil and pain was forgotten. We emerged after breakfast welcomed by a spectacularly settled day with gentle winds. It was a joy to be on skis pulling the pulks on an easy hard-packed surface. We camped that night at the head of the Briggs Glacier, well-positioned under the Trident Massif – if only the weather would hold we would get something accomplished.

And we did. In three successive days, we climbed all three peaks of the Trident and, in keeping with Neptune, named them after the Greek goddesses Thalassa, Thetis and Tethys.

Optimism soared and we planned to carry on across the Kohl Plateau and find a new way onto to the Konig Glacier that leads to Fortuna Bay, an elegant traverse. But the gods (and goddesses) had other ideas and we woke up to a rain storm – in winter, at 850m, something I didn't think possible. We stayed hunkered down for the day, and this apparent anomaly was explained by Dave on our evening radio sched. The GRIB file showed a massive north-east airstream bringing relatively warm air down from the South Atlantic and this was going to persist for the next few days.

We called it a day and the boat came up to meet us. Capitalising on the north-easter, a dream scenario for a quick return, we left bound for Stanley. Things rarely work out as planned on South Georgia.

YW

“ We set out into the headwind with gusts strong enough to knock us off our feet ”



▲ Above: Duncan having a snooze with a friend on an iceberg. ◀ Below left: Stephen Davis's award-winning shot of king penguins



▲ Above: toasting Shackleton at his monument in Grytkviken. ▼ Below: Duncan adds to the cairn above Ocean Harbour on the east side of the island





The fast and



Comanche and *Wild Oats XI*, two very different super-maxis, caused a media storm at the end of the Sydney Hobart, finishing minutes apart, but it was a 29-year-old Farr 43 that won the race overall. Matthew Sheahan and Crosbie Lorimer report

the steadfast

ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART

Weeks before the start of the 2014 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race the focus was on the battle of the super-maxis. Five 100-footers would go

head to head in the 70th edition of one of the world's classic offshore races. But there were two grand-prix giants in particular that were stealing the show: Jim Clark's new VPLP-designed extreme machine *Comanche* alongside the boat that had taken line honours seven times, scored overall victories twice and holds the outright course record, Bob Oatley's *Wild Oats XI*.

The little and large of the super-maxi scene, these two monohulls looked so different and yet provided incredibly close racing. With aft sections as wide and flat as a tennis court, *Comanche* has the looks of a potent offwind flyer; by comparison, *Wild Oats XI*'s skinny, almost tubular form suggested a hull more at home with lighter, trickier conditions where waterline length and minimal wetted surface area would keep her ghosting along.

Yet just 49 minutes separated the pair at the end of the two-day drag race to Hobart and *Wild Oats XI* took yet another line honours victory, her eighth, making her the most successful boat in the history of the event, a remarkable achievement.

Apart from her crew of highly experienced and professional crew, who have raced aboard her for many years, *Wild Oats XI* is also notable for the number of tweaks and reconfigurations she has had. A year earlier she had made the news after being nicknamed the Swiss Army Knife, following the addition of multiple foils. This year the mods were fewer, but no less significant. But the fact remains that for a nine-year-old boat to beat a brand new, no-holds-barred, master blaster was no mean feat.

It was no surprise that these boats attracted so much interest, but there was another twist. Just over a day after the big guns had finished, *Wild Rose*, a 29-year-old Farr 43, crossed the line to win the IRC division overall.

Roger Hickman's amateur crew, including his brother and sister, had been among the favourites from the start and with good reason. This was Hickman's 38th Sydney Hobart and the second time he had won the race. The last time had been aboard the same boat, 21 years earlier, when she was owned by Bob Oatley and named *Wild Oats*.

Crosbie Lorimer takes a closer look at these three outstanding boats.

Matthew Sheahan

“What further mods can be effected? We've still got a few tricks up our sleeves”

C. Borlenghi/Rolex



WILD OATS XI

TWO THEMES recurred consistently in interviews with the skippers of the five super-maxis in this year's Rolex Sydney Hobart: good management and the right people. In both regards the core of the *Wild Oats XI* team has remained remarkably consistent over the decade since she was launched and the contribution that made to their record-breaking win in 2014 should not be underestimated.

But no amount of experience and expertise can make good a shortfall in boat speed. So what have been the major modifications necessary to keep *Wild Oats XI* on the pace?

Regular crewmember naval architect Steve Quigley cites five changes that have contributed most to *Wild Oats XI*'s winning ways over her nine-year lifespan.

The first was the removal of the forward rudder and the installation of the daggerboards, which made the boat more efficient downwind, but just as importantly improved lateral lift and VMG upwind. The daggerboards came with their own issues, however, the most problematic of which was the substantial shift in the centre of lateral resistance (CLR) which didn't necessarily match the centre of effort (COE) under different sail configurations.

Small variations could be expected, but when changing from a jib to a Code 0 the COE on *Wild Oats XI* was moving forward by metres, producing lee helm in light airs.

LOA	30.48m	100ft 0in
Beam	5.10m	16ft 9in
Draught	5.91m	19ft 5in
Displacement	32,000kg	70,550lb
Ballast	14,000kg	30,864lb
Sail area: mainsail	382m ²	4,112ft ²
Jib	228m ²	2,454ft ²
Genoa	535m ²	5,759ft ²
Spinnaker	880m ²	9,472ft ²
IRC Rating	1.974	

Designed by Reichel/Pugh

Built by McConaghy, launched December 2005

Hull type carbon/Nomex monohull



To resolve this issue a forward centreboard was added – the second major modification – supplementing the twin daggerboards and stabilising the balance of the boat in the low wind ranges up to the point where boat speed matches wind speed, where the daggerboards take over again

The third refinement was the addition of a lateral foil (not a DSS, they say). Off the breeze in a seaway and strong winds *Wild Oats XI* had a tendency to bury the bow. The lateral foil provides lift and reduces that tendency, resulting in a more even downwind speed profile. A longer lateral foil was recently tested and shows further promise.

The fourth refinement was a new mast, 250kg lighter than its predecessor and substantially stiffer, with significant improvements in upwind speeds, especially in lighter airs. The stiffer mast gave the sail trimmers more options.

The final modification was the reshaping of the bow and rebuild of the bowsprit. The whole bow section was refaired to a narrower profile up to two metres abaft the stem and the bowsprit constructed to a more aerodynamic shape – the bobstay stem fitting was also lifted 500mm.

The result had additional benefits beyond streamlining. “The bow team . . . couldn’t believe how dry the boat now was,” says skipper Mark Richards.

As *Wild Oats XI* berthed in Hobart having achieved a record eight line honours wins in ten years, her owner Bob Oatley vowed to bring his boat back again next year. It is hard to know what further modifications can be effected. When quizzed on the subject after the race, helmsman Stuart Bannatyne smiled wryly, but was giving little away: “We’ve still got a few tricks up our sleeves!”



BOW The refairing of the bow section, remodelling of the bowsprit and lifting of the bobstay attachment to the stem have streamlined the forward end of the boat and made it drier for the bow team. Photographers are the only losers



LATERAL FOIL The lateral foil adds lift downwind, reducing any tendency to bury the bow into waves and thus improving the downwind speed profile. The foil is deployed to the windward side in upwind mode to minimise drag



FOILS From left to right: starboard daggerboard, rudder, keel, forward centreboard, port daggerboard. The aperture for the lateral foil can just be seen on the starboard side of the hull. Note original position of the bobstay



WITH COMANCHE Given that *Wild Oats XI*'s stern can fit twice into *Comanche*'s it's hard to believe that the two boats were so evenly matched. But when *Comanche* heels at 25° she has the same wetted surface as *Wild Oats*. The latter's narrower cross section allows her to gain mileage from VMG running

Photos: C. Lorimer



COMANCHE

"THE DESIGN office were told specifically by me that if this boat wasn't the worst rated boat in history they have failed," Dr Jim Clark said about his new raceboat. Not exactly the sort of remark you might expect, perhaps, but Clark, founder of software company Netscape, is well known for his singular approach to his many sailing ventures.

For Clark, owner of the 295ft three-masted schooner *Athena* and the replica J Class *Hanuman*, the goal for his brand new 100ft super-maxi *Comanche* is first and foremost to break records.

Not surprising then that he should look to his regular skipper Ken Read and the French design team collaboration

of Verdier Design/VPLP. Despite a punishing one-year timeline for the build team, project managers Tim Hacket and Brandon Linton worked with boat captain Casey Smith – all three were involved in Read's previous Volvo campaign – to see the new boat launched on time from the Hodgdon Yard in Maine, given an impressive first run in heavy airs and then put on a ship to Sydney.

First impressions of *Comanche* under sail inevitably draw comparisons with the current crop of IMOCA 60s and globe-circling multihulls in which the design team excels. With massive beam at the stern, long reverse sheer, the mast well aft of 50 per cent of the boat length, towering narrow mainsail and a long boom overhanging the stern, everything is built for speed when the wind is abaft the beam.

In anything above eight knots of true wind *Comanche* starts to move out of displacement mode and at 25° of heel she has the same wetted surface as *Wild Oats XI* – the more remarkable when you consider that you could fit two of *Wild Oats's* sterns into *Comanche's*.

Helming *Comanche* requires a different mindset, according to Read: "You sail the boat a bit like a multihull in a way, it's so wide you rock it up on its 'leeward hull'."

With the boat arriving in Sydney in early December, giving precious little time for testing, Ken Read understood the importance of having a mine of experience aboard: "You can't take a chance, you have to put people on board that have seen the movie before and know how to create a happy ending," he says.

Watch the video



Scan here or go to
yachtingworld.com/comanche

LOA	30.50m	100ft 0in	Designed by	Verdier Design/VPLP
Beam	7.80m	25ft 6in	Built by	Hodgdon Yachts, Maine, USA and Owner's build team
Draught	6.50m	21ft 4in	Mast/boom	Southern Spars
Mast height	46.00m	150ft 0in	Sails	North Sails
Displacement	31,000kg	68,343lb	Hydraulics	Cariboni
Mainsail	410m ²	4,413ft ²	Foils	Re Fraschini
Downwind sail area	1,022m ²	11,000ft ²	Winch System	Harken with Jon Williams
Upwind sail area	350m ²	3,767ft ²	Rigging	ECsix
Largest spinnaker	1,100m ²	11,840ft ²		
IRC Rating	1.958			



“You can’t take a chance, you have to put on board people who have seen the movie before”

C. Borlenghi/Rolex

Sure enough, the *Comanche* team for Hobart read like a Who’s Who of America’s Cup and Volvo Ocean racing, including Casey Smith, Stan Honey, Kelvin Harrap, Tony Mutter, Kimo Worthington and even a late signing of Jimmy Spithill. Even before *Comanche* had left Sydney Harbour on Boxing Day there were two very clear signs that the Americans were not simply in town to make up the numbers.

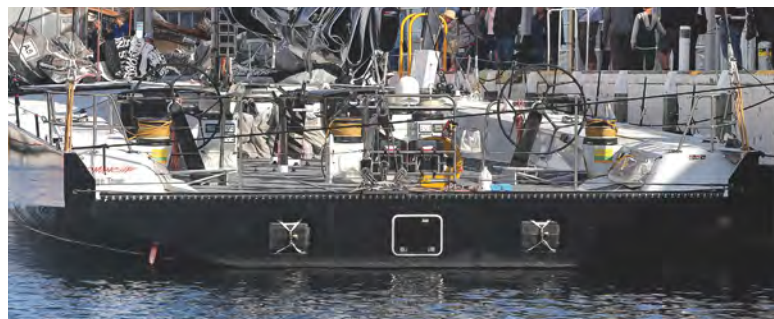
The first came a week before when *Comanche* gave *Wild Oats XI* an impressive run in the SOLAS Big Boat Challenge, an aptly named fast-paced showcase race around Sydney Harbour that has a habit of publicly showing up any weaknesses in boats and crews.

The second came on race day itself when *Comanche* left the four other 100-footers flat-footed from the start line as she powered the short 1.7nm to the first turning mark near the harbour entrance, averaging more than 20 knots.

The range of conditions that are characteristic of the Sydney Hobart Race, however, was unlikely to favour *Comanche*’s no-compromise design and, despite a powerful surge late on the second day, she crossed the finish line in Hobart 49 minutes behind *Wild Oats XI*.

It is a hallmark of the impression that *Comanche* made on the Australian sailing scene that as *Wild Oats XI* vainly chased the American yacht down Sydney Harbour from the start line it was the race-winning skipper Mark Richards himself who was heard on live TV voicing what everyone else was thinking:

“They are smoking! Look at that thing go... woohh!”



Photos: C. Lorimer

STERN *Comanche*’s beamy stern swiftly earned her the tag The Aircraft Carrier. Her optimum heel angle is anything over 20°, while at 25° she has the same wetted surface as *Wild Oats XI*. The fitting of an escape hatch and the liferaft stowage in her stern are a direct result of lessons learned from the capsizing of *Rambler* in the 2011 Rolex Fastnet



MAST As with the IMOCA 60s, the mast is positioned well back in the boat; sited directly above the canting keel, the mast is deck-stepped on a triangulated mast post integrated into the same frame as the keelbox. Static loads on the mast base are in the order of 75 tonnes, increasing to 150 tonnes under sail



DEFLECTORS The 150ft (46m) four-spreader rig features two running backstays and three deflectors, precluding the need for checkstays for mast bend control, and also reducing windage and weight aloft. Mast height was limited to be able to pass under Sydney Harbour Bridge



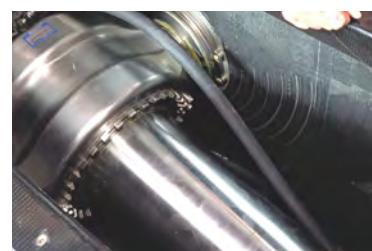
COCKPIT AND WINCHES Sail handling is by grinder-powered Harken winches with customised drive shafts, grinder pedestals and gearboxes to cater for the substantial torque. The winch pedestals are placed inboard to permit stacking of up to four sails in the cockpit



WHEEL POSITION The steering pedestals can be moved to a position at the forward end of the cockpit (ringed), just behind a detachable hard dodger over the companionways, affording the helmsmen and crew maximum protection if required for long passages



DEFLECTOR RAMS The three deflectors controlling mast bend are trimmed by three hydraulic rams that work interactively. Although cheat sheets have been developed for basic settings, the crew is still exploring setting refinements for these



CANTING KEEL The canting keel is controlled by a 350kg titanium ram built by Cariboni. The keel can be swung 35° either side of centre and moved through the full arc in about 25 seconds. A secondary slave cylinder can be used to swing the keel if the primary ram fails

ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART

Photos: C Lorimer



WATER BALLAST Manifolds, pipes and valves controlling water ballast are located behind the navstation bulkhead. Water ballast comprises 6.5 tonnes per side in three tanks on each flank. All pipework is built in carbon fibre



COMPASS The cheapest fitting on the boat is a card compass that would look more at home on a Laser. Though the helmsmen and trimmers use the digital read-outs, the rules require a card compass to be fitted, so the team went looking for the simplest and lightest



NAVIGATION STATION is located immediately behind the companionway bulkhead, also being the point from which all the boat's electrics are controlled. The carbon fibre chart table can be tacked and the bench seat is long enough to allow the navigator to sleep or rest here if required



TACKING HEADS There are two concessions to 'luxury' aboard *Comanche*, one being a carbon fibre tray for six coffee cups and the other a carbon heads that can be tacked! No privacy for the latter, of course



C Borlough/Rolox. Below: C Lorimer

WILD ROSE

"SAILING IS 80 PER CENT good housekeeping," says Roger Hickman (right), skipper of *Wild Rose*, the overall winner under IRC of the Rolex Sydney Hobart race. It is certainly testament to Hickman's approach to good housekeeping and the crew's experience that the *Wild Rose* team finished the race at all, much less collected the silverware.



"You're only as good as your weakest link and in our case that was our steering," adds Hickman, recalling the broach that broke their steering gear off Tasman Island. Within minutes the team had the spinnaker down, emergency steering in place, breakage mended and the boat on its way again.

Shortly afterwards the boat recovered from a Chinese gybe – Hickman's first in 38 Hobart races, he recalls – before enduring a torrid battle across Storm Bay and up the Derwent River in conditions that ranged from dead calm to full gale.

Hickman's long and successful record of races to Hobart also involves an association with the owner of this year's line honours-winning *Wild Oats XI*. The 29-year-old *Wild Rose*, a Farr 43, built by John McConaghy, was originally owned and raced as *Wild Oats* by Bob Oatley, with whom Hickman raced to Hobart three times before Oatley decided to have a new boat. Recognising her qualities Hickman was keen to buy the yacht and speaks with gratitude about the very generous terms on which Oatley eventually sold in 1991.

The full potential of the yacht was realised two years later when Hickman and co-owners Bruce Foy and Lance Peckman won the Sydney Hobart overall under IOR, before renaming her.

Twenty-one years on and Roger Hickman's love of his boat and his respect for its first owner is still evident. "I feel lucky and privileged to have Bob Oatley's boat," he said as he held up the Tattersall's Cup in Hobart.



BOWSPRIT Hickman is the first to point out that the bowsprit added to the boat prior to the race is not attractive. But it played an important role in the race. Hickman was advised that he would never beat a Beneteau First on handicap – the First 40s have enjoyed considerable success in this race over recent years – unless he could improve the boat's light airs performance. The bowsprit allows the boat to set a Code O, which was well used in the light airs of the second day. "It's coming straight off and the bow roller's going back on," says the owner



1980s PROFILE *Wild Rose* demonstrates the characteristic long stern overhang and rounded mid-section profile of the classic 1980s IOR hull shapes. This is the stern view of the boat that many of her competitors bemoan seeing too often. At the end of last year's race she was crowned the winner of the season's Blue Water Pointscore Series

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Swan Cup
Swan 45 World Championship
Earlybird...1st
Swan 42 Class
Natalia...1st
Class A1
Nikata - Swan 82...1st
Class A2
Wohpe - Swan 601...1st
Class C
Finola - Swan 36...1st
Mini Maxi Worlds
Alegre...1st
Robertissima III...2nd
Ran 5...3rd
Bella Mente...4th*
Caol Ila R...5th
Jethou...6th
ORC World Championship
Class A
Enfant Terrible...1st
Class B
Forte...1st
Class C
Low Noise...1st
Round Britian Race/Overall
Varuna...1st
Copa Del Rey
IRC 1
Hurakan...1st
Team Vision Future...2nd
IRC 0
Bella Mente...2nd*
Robertissima...3rd
TP52
Ran...2nd
Azzurra...3rd
Swan 60
Bronenosec...1st
Spirit of Europe...2nd
Windward...3rd

ORC 1
Rats on Fire...1st
Earlybird...2nd
Elena Nova...3rd
ORC 2
Movistar...1st
X35
Lelagain...1st
Puerto Deportivo
Benalmadena...2nd
Red Electrica de Espana...3rd
Palma Vela
Mini Maxis
Ran 5...1st
Robertissima III...2nd
Alegre...3rd
Jethou...4th
Wild Joe...5th
Commodores Cup
Winning Team
Ireland...1st
Antix, Catapult, Quokka 8
Cowes Week
Black Group/Overall
Yes...1st
IRC 0
Cape Fling...1st
IRC 2
Yes...1st
IRC 3
Puma Logic...1st
IRC 4
Strait Dealer...1st
IRC 5
ETB Tyres...1st
IRC 6
Whooper...1st
IRC 7
Madelaine...1st
J/109
Inspara...1st
XOD
Lass...1st

Dragon
Jerboa...1st
Etchells
China White...1st
First 40
La Response...1st*
First 40.7
Incognito...1st
Quarter Ton
Bullit...1st
J/Cup
J/109
Jahmali...1st
Jubilee...2nd
Tigh Soluis...3rd
J/111
Journeymaker...2nd
Jitterbug...3rd*
J/97
Just Like That...1st
Indulgence...2nd
Jaslan...3rd
IRC 1
Kaya - J/122...1st
Assarain V - J/133...2nd
Jump - J/133...3rd
IRC 2
Jongleur - J/88...1st
Who's to Know - J/92...2nd*
Quarter Ton Cup
Bullit...1st
Alice II...2nd
Illegal Immigrant...3rd
Aguila...4th
Illes Pitiuses...5th
Blackfun...6th
Espada...7th
Whiskers...8th*
Cote...9th
Penguin Playboy...10th
Round Ireland Race
Tanit - BH36...1st
Ruth...2nd
Inis Mor...3rd

J/109 Irish Nationals
Jelly Baby...1st
Joker II...2nd
Jedi...3rd
ICRA Irish Nationals
IRC
Jump Juice...1st
IRC 1
Jelly Baby...1st
IRC 2
Checkmate XV...1st
IRC 3
Quest...1st
ISORA Overall Series
Ruth...1st
Mojito...2nd
Sgrech...3rd
Panerai Classic Regatta
Soufriere...1st
MMD Spring Series
Class 0 IRC
Freya...1st
Godot...2nd
Volvo Cork Week
IRC 1/Overall
Catapult...1st
IRC 2
Quokka 8...1st
IRC 3
Storm...1st
IRC 4
Insatiable...1st
IRC 5
Illes Pitiuses...1st
Harbour Race
Quokka 8...1st
Antix...2nd
Catapult...3rd
WIORA
IRC 1/Overall
Now What...1st

Antigua Race Week/Overall
Tonnere...1st
RORC
IRC/Overall
Tonnere...1st
IRC 3
Raging Bee...1st

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ABOVE: 2014 Mini Maxi World Championship winner *Alegre* powers upwind with her 3Di 870 jib and 3Di 870 Raw mainsail. Jesús Renedo photo.





Into the PIT LANE

Imagine handing over the keys of your boat right after the finish of a race and only picking them up days before the next. This is what is happening in the Volvo Ocean Race. Why? Matthew Sheahan finds out



Imagine Lewis Hamilton, Nico Rosberg and all the other Formula One drivers having to hand in their keys to the grand-prix organisers as they step out of their cars at the end of each race. As the circus left town and rolled on to the next venue, the teams would not be allowed to work on the cars. Even when they were handed back a day or two before the race, fully serviced and ready to roll, all the teams could do would be fill them with fuel and replenish the driver's Camelbak with water before heading out for the qualifying session.

It might sound implausible in grand-prix motor racing, but this is pretty much what's happening in the current edition of the Volvo Ocean Race. In this year's event as crews tie up after finishing a leg they might as well be leaving their 65-footers on Volvo's park and valet pontoon. As the sailing team steps off, their shore crew climbs aboard, but unlike previous races, this time it is only to prepare the boat for Volvo's central maintenance team, The Boatyard, who will take their machine for a 6,000-mile service.

Only after three to four days will the race team get the boat back, leaving just enough time to fiddle, fettle and polish before being pressed back into action for the in-port and pro-am races shortly before starting the next offshore leg.

Forty-one years on from the first Whitbread Round the World Race, a lot has changed. Gone are the long, lazy stopovers and in come tightly controlled, time-conscious turnarounds to keep the show on the road.

Driven by the need to reduce the overall

► **Right: Nick Bice, in charge of The Boatyard**



campaign costs, slimming down the cost of a stopover was seen as a key part in making the race more affordable. The starting point, apart from halving a stopover from four to two weeks, was to reduce the number of staff needed by creating a central service and repair centre. This was only possible because the new one-design meant that all parts and processes could be standardised. Though it is still early days, with the fleet only reaching the halfway stage in the race round the world, the concept has proved successful.

Australian Nick Bice, who has competed in four Volvo races, two sailing and two running shoreside operations, now heads up the innovative Boatyard project. This time he's responsible for the entire fleet, a task that has taken a great deal of planning and preparation.

Built around seven containers each housing different specialist engineers and equipment – eg boatbuilding, sails, electronics, engineering, admin – the 60x20m floor space lies beneath a marquee-style pitched roof. Around half the 1,200m² repair area is set aside as a sail loft floor, sufficient to handle any of the boats' sails. Apart from work that takes place aboard the boats themselves, it is here that the bulk of the detailed service work and repairs are done. In addition, Volvo have built two identical travelling yards, which leapfrog each other from venue to venue round the world.

Having set up the basic infrastructure, Bice's next task was to develop the service and maintenance programme.

▲ **Above: with less than a week to work on seven boats during a stopover, it's all hands on the job.**

► **Right: Team SCA being lifted out in Cape Town**

“ When we are in full swing the team could be 45-50 people, far fewer than the total that would have been required to service the fleet last time ”



VOLVO OCEAN RACE

"My starting point was to get the job lists and race logs from all of the six previous entries. From these I established what the common issues were and started to assess what we would need," he tells me. "Aside from the variety of problems aboard the boats, there were so many ways that the teams were dealing with even reporting the issues, so standardising the procedure was also really important."

He came up with a programme whereby each VO65 has both a physical log and an online reporting system. This allows teams to register issues as they crop up during racing. Bice is then able to build a picture of what will be needed to deal with the boats when they reach the next stopover. The race log means that manufacturers and suppliers can check at any time how their job lists are developing.

"The big advantages are that I'm not sending emails back and forth, and everybody concerned can be in the loop and aware of the up and coming issues as they develop. This helps everybody to plan for the stopover. Because the boats are all the same we know how many days it takes to service a keel system or a winch system and how long it takes to service the engine. From that we know how many days and man hours we need to complete the tasks."

Bice has a core team of 15 representing various areas and, depending on the work needed, can draw on standby specialists from manufacturers.

Because the boats are all the same we know how many days it takes, say, to service a keel system

For instance, Harken has a pool of ten service engineers, but not all of them will be needed at every stopover, saving on flights and down time.

"When we are in full swing the team could be 45-50 people, far fewer than the total that would have been required to service a similar-sized fleet last time around," says Bice.

But while the one-design nature of the boats helps in the planning of maintenance, a big concern is what happens if a boat suffers a structural failure that might pose a risk to the rest of the fleet. "If an issue represents something significant for the rest of the fleet, then in conjunction with the shore managers we may make a fleet-wide call and inform all the teams," says Bice.

To achieve such co-operation requires a level of openness that has rarely been seen in an event that became ever more secretive with the VO70s. This time around, the strict one-design rules mean there is less to hide. Teams can only have a standard, modest-sized base, making it impossible to be self-sufficient, which means that they have to work with the pooled resources.

"All the shore managers meet at 5pm every night during a stopover," explains Bice. "It's a very transparent meeting – unlike anything we've had before."

But it's a yacht race and things are going to break no matter what. Still Bice declares that at the end of Leg 1 the combined job list for all the boats was less than that of a single VO70. The research and detailed work before the race had started had already paid off.

How long does it take to service a VO65?

"The longest service we have is six [person] days, which

REGULAR SERVICING AREAS

Composites	VOR consortium
Winch system	Harken
Keel system	Cariboni
Electronic hardware	Diverse
Tech support	B&G
Media	Livewire
Comms	Cobham
Sails	North Sails
Running rigging	Offshore Rigging Services
Engine	Volvo Penta
Non-destructive testing	QI Composites

is a Harken full service," Bice says. "As you would expect, the first long one was carried out before the start of the race in Alicante, the next big one will be in Auckland. At the other end of the scale, for a short service we need a minimum three days out of the water for a Harken service with two people on each boat."

However, while shortening the stopovers has reduced team costs, it has brought a new set of potential problems for the organisers, especially if the leg is a slow one and/or the weather makes getting boats in and out of the water difficult.

In that case, Bice explains that prioritising the work is key. "If a team has hit something, we may start with the non-destructive testing work and focus on looking at the foils. At each stopover we will always carry out a full ultrasound survey, which might include key focal points such as slamming areas, the rigs, booms, daggerboards and the rest of the foils, but again, we may have to prioritise depending on what each boat's team thinks it needs."

One important advantage of a one-design fleet is the issue of spares. In the past each boat would have its own particular rig, sails, rudders, keel, along with many other high-cost items. Even the cradles the VO70 boats sat in ashore were specific to each boat, which caused unnecessary logistical problems when handling the boats ashore.

"In previous races simply moving the boats from one place to another, even water to quayside meant finding the right cradle for each boat," says Bice. "Now, with a common hull shape, it's far easier." Furthermore, The Boatyard can maintain a pool of spares which not only reduces the costs for the teams, but reduces ordering and shipping expenses.

"Instead of each team having two spare daggerboards, we have four spare daggerboards for the whole fleet," explains Bice. "Instead of each team having one spare rig at €750,000 we have two that can suit the whole fleet. That's a huge, huge advantage to both the teams and the event management as it improves the chances of keeping teams in the race if problems occur."

Although the strict one-design nature of this race ensures tight controls on what teams can and can't do to their boats, it is still possible for them to carry out their own work if required, particularly if there is a repair to be made.

Watch the video



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“The teams are allowed to come in and use the Boatyard equipment if they want,” says Bice, “but being one-design there is a limit to how much they can change. A lot of the jobs in the last race were about optimising, trying to make things better, trying to make things faster, but you’re not allowed to do that now.”

One of the biggest benefits, apart from the close racing, is that not only does The Boatyard keep the show on the road, but it has detailed records to help the race management maintain the fleet in strict one-design trim. From Bice’s point of view The Boatyard’s role is simple: “We are happy to service the engine and put new brake pads in, but it’s up to you to inflate the tyres to the right pressure and add washer fluid.”

Which is still something you’re unlikely to see Lewis Hamilton ever do.



▲ **Top:** a team of specialists work on boats during stopovers, with extra drafted in if needed for specific repairs. ▲ **Above left:** two identical travelling yards leapfrog each other round the world. ▲ **Above:** sail repairs are also part of the standard service

MISSING



The strange life of Thomas Tangvald

Aged 15, Thomas Tangvald watched as his father's boat smashed on rocks – father Peter and his little sister died. Now he too is lost at sea. Jill Dickin Schinas traces his unusual life

In the summer of 1991 Peter Tangvald set sail from Puerto Rico in his gaff cutter *L'Artemis de Pytheas*. He had spent a long time there and would have stayed longer, but right now he was worried. Two years previously, Hurricane Hugo had roared through the Caribbean, doing terrible damage. Following this, the 1990 hurricane season had been the busiest on record. Frankly, the old sailor didn't want to take any more risks; he had decided to spend this season off the coast of Venezuela and thus he was embarking for Bonaire.

Watching from the shore, his friends saw the grey-haired mariner make sail before he weighed anchor. There was no one to help with these labours, because there was no other crew excepting Tangvald's seven-year-old daughter – and she was shut in her cabin. During his life this single-hander had had no fewer than seven wives, but two had died aboard the boat and the most recent one had left him. Still, he did have one other companion.

His 15-year-old son – born and bred aboard the gaffer – was now captain of his own small vessel, and he was also

heading south. 'Thomas and I will sail together,' his father wrote, just weeks before their departure, 'and together we will rediscover the world.'

As the yachts bowled away from the island, spectators shook their heads. He was wrong to be doing this. Yes, Peter Tangvald was a master mariner of incomparable skill and seamanship. He had made his first Atlantic crossing in 1957 and had been cruising ever since. No one knew the ocean as well as he did, but he was getting old now, and he was ill. He had recently suffered a massive heart attack.

Suppose he died at sea. "Have you considered what a situation you might put your kids in?" he friends asked.

But, according to his father, young Thomas Tangvald had responded on his behalf, saying: "Should the worst happen, I'll know what to do."

And so they sailed. Or rather, *L'Artemis de Pytheas* sailed, and Thomas, in his little boat, trailed astern at the end of a 300ft line. Three days later they reached Bonaire where they piled up onto the island in the dark. Peter Tangvald and his little daughter died.

Thus ended a life that had been filled with wonderful adventures and fantastic tragedy. However, it seems that it was not the final scene in the drama. Twenty three years later, and in a manner more appropriate to fiction than real life, the curse seems to have stolen the young Thomas Tangvald. In March 2014 he set sail on a voyage that was supposed to take just four weeks... and he hasn't been seen since.

At Any Cost

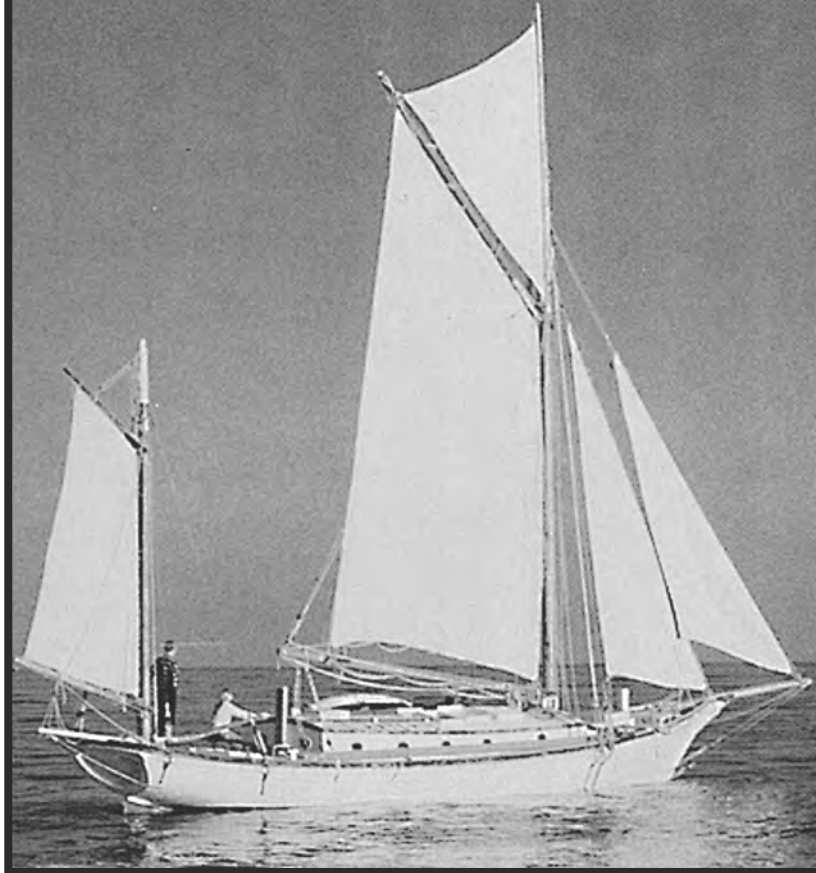
Peter Tangvald's autobiography was published posthumously and it included an epilogue written by his son. Anyone who has read *At Any Cost* will recall the boy's poignant words and his description of his sister's hysterical screams. ("I knew why she was screaming," he said afterwards to a friend. "She would have been locked in her cabin – as we always were, when at sea – while the boat was pounded to pieces all around her.") More than anything, those who have read the book remember the photo on the back cover, which shows Thomas standing forlornly among the remains of his family home. Ever since I saw that picture I have wondered what had become of him. Well, now I have my answer.

Twenty years after the disaster Thomas surfaced again in Puerto Rico, a smiling, dreadlocked blond, with a pretty wife, a small son and a gaff-rigged sloop. During his absence from the limelight he had also acquired a degree in Fluid Dynamics from Leeds University and he was aiming for a career as a naval architect. I was overjoyed to discover Thomas merrily following in his famous father's wake – but my delight was very short-lived.

Thomas Tangvald was his father's fourth child, born to his fifth wife – and therein hangs a very long tale. As Eric Hiscock is to British liveaboards, so Peter Tangvald is to the Norwegians, but while Hiscock was the epitome of a jolly good chap, Tangvald was one part Viking and two parts Casanova. His first two wives were shed while he was still a landlubber, but the third accompanied him on a voyage from the UK to America. Unfortunately, Lillemor Tangvald quickly found that she didn't like sailing, and so Peter continued alone. Preparing his vessel in Las Palmas, he met Edward Allcard – then a renowned yachtsman with three Atlantic crossings to his credit; now a centenarian – and the two decided to race across the Pond.

When Tangvald beat the more seasoned mariner he was cockahoop, and he decided to repeat his adventure. Having sold the first yacht, he returned to the UK and bought a 32ft cutter called *Dorothea*. His wife liked this boat even less, and she told him he must choose between her and sailing. He chose to continue with his new lifestyle – "for any sailor will know that it's a lot harder to get a new boat than a new woman". Eventually he met a Frenchwoman by the name of Simonne, and together they sailed round the world.

Having earned his place on the podium of yachting heroes, Tangvald decided to build a new boat. He



◀ Left: the 50ft *L'Artemis de Pytheas*, which Peter Tangvald built, to his own design, in French Guiana. It was aboard this boat that Thomas was born, his mother, Lydia, was shot and his step-mother, Ann, was lost overboard. His father and sister both died when she piled up onto a reef



▲ Above: Peter Tangvald in Cayenne, French Guiana, during the build of *L'Artemis*. ▶ Right: Peter with young Thomas shortly after his mother was shot by pirates.



▼ Below: Thomas in the wreckage of his father's boat

Photos from *At Any Cost*

made his way to Cayenne in French Guiana and here, on the edge of the forest, he built his dream ship – and he also found himself a new wife, the 17-year-old Lydia.

It is for Lydia – or, rather, for her death – that Peter Tangvald is best known. After the launch of *L'Artemis* the two crossed the Atlantic and entered the Med, eventually passing through the Red Sea and heading for Taiwan. By now the fifth Mrs T was pregnant, and they were halfway across the Indian Ocean when she gave birth to Thomas. As Thomas was to say years later: “No matter where in the world I am I always get asked the same dreaded question: ‘Where are you from?’” – and to this he had no easy answer.

Besides having no roots, Thomas never really knew his mother, for when he was just two years old the yacht was attacked by pirates and she was shot. Tangvald subsequently met and married Ann, a Chinese Malaysian woman, and she gave birth to Carmen. Little Carmen was barely one year old when her mother was lost overboard during a passage across the Atlantic.

“ No matter where in the world I am I always get asked the same dreaded question: ‘Where are you from?’ To this there is no easy answer ”



Tangvald was now utterly distraught. Though his books show him to be forever egocentric and sexist he never says anything but good of his wives, and it is clear that without a female companion he was incomplete. Still, after all the traumas he had been through he was reluctant to get involved again – until he met 18-year-old Florence.

Florence was from a sailing family and had already owned a boat and sailed it from the Bahamas to New York. She must surely have been a handy crewmember, but her main duties aboard *L'Artemis* were in the galley and the nursery, with her new baby, Virginia. Carmen eagerly accepted the new

official Mother, but Thomas, now aged ten, resented taking orders from a teenager. Thomas also disliked his sister, and had done since she entered the world. It was his jealousy of Carmen and their perpetual arguments that caused the boy eventually to buy himself his own little boat, paying for it with money earned by working for other yachtsmen.

Before too long, Florence realised that Peter's love for his women was irrevocably coloured by chauvinism, and she decided to leave. Naturally, she took her baby daughter – and “if I could, I would have taken Carmen, too,” she declared. Thus it was that, three years later, Peter set out alone with his two remaining children. And Carmen died.

His family guess that Peter most likely had another heart attack, either before or after *L'Artemis* hit the reef. Thomas managed to grab his surfboard and leap into the sea before his own boat too was carried onto the beach. If he had managed to get close then perhaps he could have helped his sister. Talking about the event afterwards, he

said: “Like lots of brothers and sisters we didn't get on. I thought I hated my little sister. But when I was asked to identify her body, I realised I didn't hate her at all. I loved her very much.”

A life ashore

So what happened next to this boy who had lived all his life on a boat and who, by the age of 15, had witnessed at first hand the death of two mothers, his father and his sister? Peter had bequeathed the care of his children to his old friends Edward and Clare Allcard. And since this couple had recently moved to a house in the Pyrenees, the sea baby suddenly found himself living in the mountains.

It might be thought that after all that he had been through Thomas would never wish to see another boat. As it turned out, however, he bought one at the very first opportunity. Being very gifted academically, he won a generous scholarship to study at university, and immediately spent it on a cutter called *Melody*. Following in the wake

not only of his dad, but also of his foster father, in 2000 he sailed alone to Antigua, arriving on his 25th birthday. Eventually he made his way back to Puerto Rico, and here he met and married Christina, a girl who was already living on her own sailing boat.

After the birth of their first son in 2008, Thomas and Christina decided that their future lay not in the modern world with all its problems, but in a quiet backwater of Brazil. So they set about buying a vessel with which to sail down there. At length they came upon the local racing sloop *Oasis* – a boat that Thomas had known and loved since his early teens. He decked her over and fitted a gaff rig. His father would have approved of the scorn that Thomas felt for the idea of installing an engine.

In order to secure residency in Brazil the couple decided they must have another child, who would be a son of that soil. Thus it was that by the time they set off in November 2011 Christina was heavily pregnant. Lucio

Tangvalds' timeline

- 1924** Per (Peter) Tangvald born in Oslo, Norway.
- 1940** His father buys him a sailing dinghy and hires a man to teach him to sail it.
- 1957** First Atlantic crossing, aboard *Windflower*, a 45ft yawl.
- 1959** Second crossing, aboard *Dorothea*, and the start of his circumnavigation.
- 1967** *Dorothea* sinks while on passage. Tangvald travels to Cayenne, French Guiana, to build a 50ft schooner.
- 1973** Launch of *L'Artemis de Pytheas*, and marriage to his fifth wife, Lydia Balta.
- 1976** Birth of Thomas Tangvald, on passage between Sri Lanka and Singapore.
- 1979** Murder of Lydia in the Sulu Sea.
- 1980** Marriage to Ann. Tangvald heads for Suez and the Med. In Tunisia the yacht is boarded by thieves who knock him unconscious and attempt to rape Ann.
- 1983** Carmen Tangvald born, in Portugal.
- 1985** *L'Artemis* crosses back to the Caribbean. While she is

Tangvald was born five days after the family's arrival, on the deck of the sloop.

To fill the coffers Thomas got a job in Cayenne, up the coast in French Guiana, and as he worked ashore *Oasis* fell into disrepair. Christina and the children returned to Puerto Rico for a time while Thomas was to search for their dream location. On 4 March 2014, at the age of 36, Thomas set off for the island of Fernando do Noronha – and Christina is still waiting for news.

Mystery

Tales abound of single-handers who have vanished only to pop up again months later. Could it be that young Tangvald is still afloat somewhere? Is he, even now, sailing round the world? How we would love to believe it, but it is far more likely *Oasis* was lost.

The passage from Cayenne to Fernando involves beating into a strong contrary current. Thomas may have felt that his boat was capable of anything, but she was also old and she was probably not well-built. And the trip out to Fernando would be made through heavy seas.

Given that he knew all about seaworthiness, it seems odd that Thomas was happy to put to sea in a vessel that was not ready for the trip, but perhaps his younger sister Virginia provides an answer. Despite the fact that she was a mere infant when their father's boat was wrecked, for years Virginia suffered from survivor's guilt. And if she, who was 2,000 miles away, felt like this, how much more will poor Thomas have suffered? Before his very eyes his father's boat broke apart, and he listened to Carmen's screams. According to Virginia, as a result of her guilt she was afraid of nothing; nothing except the possibility that she might not manage to live her life as her father had done, under sail. Thomas also idolised his father. To what extent did the burden of misplaced guilt cause him to take chances?



◀ Left: Thomas Tangvald aboard his 22ft cutter *Melody*, which he sailed solo across the Atlantic in 2000. ▼ Below: Thomas with his wife Christina and son Gaston



K Campbell



Tangvald

- three days out from Grenada, Ann is lost overboard.
- 1985** Tangvald meets 18-year-old Florence Mertens. They sail to Puerto Rico and are married.
- 1986** Birth of Virginia Tangvald, aboard *L'Artemis*.
- 1988** Florence leaves Peter Tangvald. He suffers a heart attack.
- 1990** At the age of 14, Thomas Tangvald buys his first boat, a 22-footer called *Spartan*.
- 1991** *L'Artemis* and *Spartan* are wrecked on Bonaire. Peter and Carmen die.
- 2000** Thomas sails alone to the Caribbean aboard a 22ft Itchen Ferry called *Melody*.
- 2007** Thomas marries Christina.
- 2008** Birth of Thomas and Christina's first son, Gaston.
- 2011** Thomas buys *Oasis*. In November he sets off for Brazil with his little boy and his pregnant wife.
- 2012** Arrival in Brazil. Lucio born.
- 2014** Thomas sets off from Cayenne alone and disappears.

YW

▲ Above: *Oasis* in Jost van Dyke, shortly before her journey south to Brazil. This picture: *Oasis* had a gaff rig and very low freeboard



Tangvald

Europe's top yachts

The 5 best boats of the year

If you want to know which are the best new production yachts on the market, the most reliable indicator is the European Yacht of the Year awards. Winners were announced in January at the Düsseldorf Boat Show

Toby Hodges comments

With 25 yachts tested by 11 magazines over two weeks in two locations, the European Yacht of the Year is the most thorough competition there is for production yachts. The five categories included Bluewater Cruisers for the first time in 2015, an exciting addition.



The standard of entrants was again high. This led to some close decisions, particularly in the Family Cruiser and Performance Cruiser categories. It is good to see yards taking this competition seriously and pushing to improve – witness the Bavaria Cruiser 46.

We couldn't help but feel, however, that a number of new builds suffer from trying to do too much, particularly with regard to cockpit arrangements. This mainly applies to the larger Mediterranean designs, which try to combine sleek styling with offshore cruising potential, resulting in a feast for the eyes, but leaving crew exposed to conditions in shallow cockpit designs.

Another downside to these Med-style cockpits is that, in an effort to make the boat easy to sail short-handed, the opposite can occur. A current trend is to lead sheets and running rigging back to two winches each side of the cockpit, in easy reach of the helmsman. But this arrangement can quickly result in an awkward tangle of lines, particularly when the breeze gets up.

As well as good looks, build quality is generally of a consistently high standard, however – it has to be for yards to stay in the game – and the feel on the helm is generally now richly rewarding. So although there are some pains, the gains are also high.



Bavaria 46 Cruiser

Up against: Dufour 310GL, Jeanneau SO349, Nautitech 40, RM 890

▲ **Top:** this family cruiser is a refined and re-engineered version of the 45, which sails well, and build quality and value for money combine and shine

The Bavaria 46, designed by Farr and Design Unlimited, is proof that you can get a good yacht that offers value for money. The German production giant continues to improve build quality year after year. Many of the judges spoke of this being the best Bavaria they had tested, and the most solidly built. Our Italian colleague Vanni Galgani, editor of *Fare Vela*, perhaps summarised the 46 the most eloquently (with some Italian enthusiasm of course):

"Maybe the best Bavaria ever, for sure the best of this new generation, she puts together excellent performance, both down and upwind, with outstanding interior spaces that suit perfectly both owner and charter versions. It may not be very pretty, but it is far better than the 45, with a completely new deck. And these are only the things you can see immediately, because the biggest improvements are done in the hidden parts, with general quality the best of her class. All this, not to forget, at a very, very good price."

€164,900 (£125,914) www.bavaria-yachtbau.com

“ Hats off to Bavaria. They have turned the ugly duckling into a wonderful swan ”

Loïc Madeline, Voile Magazine, FRA



▲ Above: the inviting, classic, roomy interior by Design Unlimited has no chart table, but works well



Photos: JM Lot



Photos: B Kolthof

Category – **Luxury Cruiser**

Wauquiez Centurion 57

Up against: Dufour 310GL, Jeanneau SO349, Nautitech 40, RM 890

▲ **Top:** the 57 coped admirably with nasty conditions in Italy, and provides exceedingly comfortable one-level living below decks

With the Centurion 57, Wauquiez is certainly sending out a clear message that it is back in the business of producing quality cruisers for discerning sailors. This boat represents good build quality at a reasonable price and is a comfortable and well-finished yacht. It was also one of only a couple of yachts to venture out in the big seas and swells during our tests when the wind rose to Force 7, and she coped commendably with the conditions.

She is not the most modern-looking of her category, and indeed the Berret-Racoupeau hull is taken from the seven-year-old 55 pilot saloon, but she is perhaps the most timeless, with the heart of a real cruising yacht. More versatile than radical, she feels robust, well thought-out and finished with a warm and calm interior.

€659,000 (£503,200). www.wauquiez.com

“ A ‘safe’ choice maybe, but a just one, offering the best complete package of all ”

Jan Briek, *Waterkampioen*, NED



Category – Performance Cruiser

JPK 1080

Up against: Corsaire Cruze 970, Dehler 46, Jeanneau Sun Fast 3600, Mylius 15E25

▲ **Top:** this is an excellent racer-cruiser, with twin rudders, which sails high yet flies offwind. Her deck layout is particularly well thought-out.

► **Right:** basic below, but spacious and smart enough for cruising

As the appeal of racing short-handed grows steadily, there is a greater incentive for owners to find boats that are suitable and competitive for both short-handed and fully crewed racing. In the 36ft range, two boats in particular have been attracting a great deal of interest: the Sun Fast 3600 and the JPK 1080. Little surprise then that both boats made it to the shortlist.

When it came to the judging, the competition was very tight between these two. There was little to choose between their accommodation and layout. Both are well thought-out and easy to sail. Both handle well and already have promising racing results. But the JPK has the edge for her configuration when fully crewed and appears to be slightly more versatile. We also prefer the construction of the JPK.

€159,532 (£121,815). www.jpk.fr

“ A fantastic boat in terms of pure sailing: light, but consistent, fast and very reactive ”

Vanni Galgani, *Fare Vela ITA*



Photos: JMLiot



Category – Bluewater Cruiser

Boreal 52

Up against: Broadblue Rapier 550, Garcia Exploration 45, Ovni 52 Evolution

There cannot be many brochures that describe their boat's accommodation as having 'a desk in every cabin where bluewater children can do their homework'. But this is just one of many examples of what this boat is all about – live aboard, go anywhere. She is solidly built and, while her chined alloy hull won't appeal to everyone, the same rugged style will instil confidence in many.

As for performance, at 18 tonnes she was surprisingly nimble, even in the light winds of our test, and was a very easy boat to handle with well thought-out control line runs. All this for a custom-built boat with a price tag that is still considerably less than some popular alternatives, even when you've added all the listed options.

The Boreal 52 demonstrates what a real deepwater cruiser should be. She has a lifting keel and is full of clever and innovative details, especially in the doghouse/ navstation, which is based on many miles' experience.

▲ **Above:** excellent protection is offered by the doghouse. An ideal liveaboard for remote cruising

Yachting World tested:
February 2015

€685,000 (£523,052). www.boreal-yachts.com

“ Ultimate go-your-own-way-cruiser, with an ideal separation between 'sailing' and 'living' ”

Jan Briek,, *Waterkampioen*, NED



Photos: J.M. Lot

Category – Special Yacht

Advanced Yachts 44

Up against: Astus 24, Pogo 3, Pointer 25, Saffier Se 33

Sometimes you have to reward the will to do something wild and different. The Advanced 44 lives up to her name by being the most contemporary monohull of 2014. She puts sailing pleasure above trivialities such as practicality and cost.

And what a sensation she provides! The ride is stable, direct and super-responsive. This is a true supercar of the sea. The 44 is an innovative, flamboyant plaything, a high-performance raceboat that is a luxury pad for day cruising. A sailing clinic arranged by the builder helps buyers manage the boat and get the best from her.

A great job by Nauta Design and Roberto Biscontin, she has performance to match her style. Congratulations to Advanced Yachts for having the courage to do such a project.

€650,000 (£496,327). www.advancedyachts.it

Yachting World tested: January 2015



▲ **Above:** not the conditions the A44 was designed for, but pulsating fun all the same. ▶ **Right:** the interior is tastefully stylish, calm and comfortable



Photos: B. Kolthof



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RUNNING BEFORE A GALE

SOUTHERN WINDS

by Sebastian Smith

Introduced by
Tom Cunliffe

Enthusiastically running south before a lively breeze, happily passing one safe port after another and confused by an idiosyncratic Italian weather forecast, Sebastian Smith and his wife, Adèle, soon find that their good breeze turns into a full gale



After over a decade of compiling the Great Seamanship column for *Yachting World*, I have concluded that maritime writing is made special not by the remarkable feats it describes, but by the quality of the product itself. Today's world is brimming with tales of extraordinary derring-do as adventurers are driven to extremes by the need to be first. Sadly, a desperate exploit by no means guarantees a satisfying read.

To set aside Sebastian Smith's book, *Southern Winds*, published in 2004, because its useful maps show what for many today is a commonplace peregrination in the Mediterranean would be a grave mistake. *Southern Winds* is not written to impress the reader with the author's bravery, it is a rich meditation on how the famous winds of that sea have formed its character through the ages.

Sebastian Smith is an award-winning foreign correspondent.

With his wife, Adèle, he takes his readers on a cruise in the Contessa 26 *Shamaal* from the South of France to the Aegean, then on to Gibraltar. His description of the seafaring is top-class, both for choice of words and technical analysis, but the way this is blended with scholarly reflections on the ancients and more recent literary figures is an ever-lively joy.

The Mistral, Meltemi, Bora and Sirocco rattle Smith's stainless rigging just as they did the hemp cordage of Menelaus, Odysseus and Shelley. Indeed, the account here takes place in the waters where the poet was drowned with his companions. Space has obliged me to omit the fascinating references to much of this, but the pay-off is that we can read a unique account of a run in gale conditions, interspersed with observations on the nature of sailing for its own sake, from one of the true philosophers of our calling.



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“Late afternoon, we shot into the Tyrrhenian Sea. Behind, the last islets of the Strait of Bonifacio glittered white in the descending sun. Ahead, the headlands of east Sardinia paraded south like bathing elephants. ‘Let’s keep on?’ Adèle had read my mind. Why stop for the night in Olbia when going like this? Careering down wave fronts, squeezing through troughs and leaping southward, *Shamaal* definitely didn’t want to stop.

Adèle and I watched spellbound. ‘Yes, let’s keep on.’ The wind began to veer from west to north. A following wind: Aeolus would abet our plan. The physical exhilaration was only part of the reason to continue. There is a twisted satisfaction in giving the slip to one perfectly good port after another. Isola Caprera, Cala di Volpe, the anchorage behind Capo Figari and, soon, Olbia – in turn each of our safe havens fell behind.

We felt as if we already knew these places. The guidebooks had every detail: the good restaurants, the smell in the harbour, the friendliness or not of the officials, the availability of showers, loos, washing machines, the prices (everything came down to prices). Ahead lay only the night, waves and the deserted massif of one of the Mediterranean’s most ironbound coasts.

The wind, as forecast that morning, had eased off a good bit and, besides, it blew from astern, which always calms a boat. So I gave little thought at sunset to the thin line of cloud appearing on the north-west horizon.

Adèle climbed down into the cabin and cranked the VHF for the evening Italian weather forecast. It would be reassuring to know what they said. From the dark cockpit, I could see one part of Adèle’s face in the soft, red glow of the night light. To our right, the shore around Olbia sparkled. Ahead and to the left the sea moved invisibly. ‘I think I’ve got it,’ Adèle sounded mystified. ‘But the way they do the forecast is weird – I’m not sure I took it down right. Maybe you should have a go.’

Each country’s marine forecast has its quirks: Britain’s is punctual, read by real people, but reptilian in its sangfroid; France’s is unexpectedly chaotic and broadcast by a brutal computerised voice; Italy’s, at least for the uninitiated, is plain bewildering. Read at dictation speed and consisting mostly of numbers – ‘one’, for example, meaning a calm sea, ‘four’ a rough sea – the result resembled an encrypted message.

‘All right, then, what did you hear?’

‘North-east Force 4 tonight and tomorrow,’ Adèle appeared surprisingly sure. ‘And you?’

I hesitated. ‘North-east Force 7 to 8 – gale.’

‘Let’s listen again?’

We swapped places. The notepad on the chart table filled with numbers, wind directions, crossings-out and question marks.

‘I’m sure they’re saying *sette-otto*.’

‘No, I heard *quattro*.’

We drove on south, the wind increased and in the cabin the green light of the radio, our travelling oracle, shone unsteadily.

Shamaal plunged into the night, both sails reefed to a minimum, the boat seesawing through erratic waves at five knots. On deck, we moved in slow motion, using hands and knees to balance. Below, the stove swung on its gimbals, a stack of plates knocking rhythmically against the bulkhead. At the chart table I tried to envision the hidden landscape outside. The yellow border of land on the chart of east Sardinia looked friendly enough, but I guessed that dawn would reveal a wall of rocks and high cliffs.

There was no longer doubt about the wind. Already it blew Force 5-6, and the growing seas suggested we were in for more. Olbia, one of the last places easy to enter, was now far behind, but I felt no regret, no wish to be tucked safely along a quay. Enough of tramping. Now was the time to feel the wider measure of the sea.

There is great, rare purity in this kind of travel. We did not even know where we would stop, or when, and we didn’t much care. We were travelling not to arrive, but to keep moving. And that, however fleeting, is a kind of freedom that is impossible to achieve easily on land.

Dawn illuminated foam-streaked seas and the oyster-shell silver of distant Sardinian cliffs. My off-watch ended as the sun rose glaring, but I had hardly slept and could only wish Adèle luck as she left the cockpit for her own three hours of rest. ‘Bed’ was the sea berth opposite the chart table. You climbed in, lower legs wedged under the sink, and tied yourself down with a canvas cloth. It was like sleeping through an earthquake.

Outside, the clear skies and early morning sun appeared cheerful, but the north-east

wind whooped through the rigging. The anemometer held above my head recorded Force 7, a near-gale. Waves rolled down from astern, watery boulders the size of *Shamaal*, either from due north or sneaking through from the east. Mostly they overtook us straight under the rudder, lifting *Shamaal* end to end.

Often, waves broke at the crests, the dark blue mass of water feathering into a curtain of green before shattering, white effervescence cascading down its face. Some broke against *Shamaal*’s quarter, showering the cockpit. First a thump that in the cabin sounded like a sledgehammer, then the hiss and bubble of escaping froth.

Sailing under nothing more than a small foresail, we continued for the next two hours at four and a half knots. If napping while



▲ Above: Sebastian Smith braces in the cockpit of *Shamaal* in strong winds

◀ Left: the old-fashioned methods are sometimes the best. The author taking a noon sight



tied into a shaking bunk was difficult, then eating had become an ordeal. Adèle battled the paraffin cooker, but was sick three times before a cup of coffee could be made. Eventually she produced a potato salad that we ate with biscuits, every mouthful that stayed down a minor triumph.

By mid-morning, a full gale blew. We were down to the storm jib, which is the size of a towel, and by midday no sail at all – and still we were bounding south at three and a half knots on the flat, six knots down the waves. ‘Force 8. Big seas, many breaking,’ I wrote in the logbook. ‘No sail. Taking occasional water over stern. Trying to avoid surfing – doing six knots on waves.’

To run before a gale in a boat steered by windvane is something like an out-of-body experience – you are bystander and participant at the same time. Dry inside our oilskins and attached by lifelines to the boat, we appeared to be travelling in a magic cocoon through the storm. Yet the sea, so deep a blue you’d expect a dipped hand to return painted, rushed centimetres under the gunwales.

Sometimes the wider view, a good 360° turn, was breathtaking: everything jumping and heaving and rolling, and little *Shamaal*, her shade of blue so much more friendly, sliding straight through the middle. Rising and falling, we’d become part of the waves, and with no sail, yet still shooting forward, part of the wind – so much part of the wind that the voyage was almost beyond our control.

On all the east coast of Sardinia, there was no obvious place to shelter, not in that weather, and another day and night of running before the wind would have put us under the protection of the island’s southern tip. Only Arbatax, a remote industrial and fishing port, seemed a possibility, but that, too, presented a problem: its entrance faced almost directly into the gale and waves. I called the coastguard for advice.

There is always a slight element of wonder when radio contact is established from sea to shore and on Sunday in sleepy Sardinia all the more. So when there was no answer to my initial calls I was not surprised. Arbatax lay only a couple of miles south now and its moment would soon pass. But then a fourth call and contact.

Yes, a coastguard officer said, we should try: the entrance was good, deep and wide – even in these seas. There was no time to debate. To reach Arbatax through the waves we had to begin a shallow-angled approach at once, or fly past the headland and continue south. Disconnecting the windvane to steer by hand, we

▲ Above: the Smiths’ Contessa 26 *Shamaal II* in calmer conditions

warmed the engine, held our breath and skated towards the surf.

Concentrate, I told myself. Flying towards rocks and the line of pounding waves felt wrong. Confused by the shoals and reverberations, the waves in the final 100m were steep and without rhythm. The wind in the mast and hull still sent us quickly over the ground and below water the propeller turned slowly.

Spray curtained the walls of Arbatax. Strangely, it was in these last minutes that we saw our only other boat of the day, a German yacht also making for the harbour. The vessel, much larger than *Shamaal*, may have been parallel with us for hours, but hidden from view by the seas. I was shocked at how she lurched in the waves.

Rocks, breaking water, the tan beach and glimpses of that madly swaying German boat, then we were in. The waves vanished suddenly, almost throwing Adèle and me off balance, but the wind blew unchecked. It blew so hard over the harbour wall that at full power *Shamaal*’s motor barely cleared us from the next set of inner walls. Exactly what would have happened in the Greek myths, I thought, wrecked inside the harbour.

A necklace of car tyres and iron rings beckoned from the side of a quay built for ships. Not ideal, but if we could just get alongside without crashing into the wall or the other boats . . . I moved *Shamaal* crabwise, wind and propeller balanced against each other, a high-wire act that I wouldn’t manage for long. A sailor, American it turned out, stood on the quay ready for our lines. Coil and heave – he got them. In the seconds it took to tie a few knots, *Shamaal* was made safe. ‘That is some wind! Gusting to Force 9, I make it,’ the American said. I tried to look nonchalant, but really I was glad I hadn’t known that before.

”

► Right: Adèle steers in full foulweather gear





ON TEST GT35

Dancing in sensible shoes?

Will quality, seaworthiness and strength for bluewater cruising really make the GT35 a reliable mover? asks Pip Hare

TEST FACTS

Boat tester: Pip Hare



- ▶ Where we tested: the Solent, South Coast, UK
- ▶ Wind: 18-28 knots
- ▶ Model: standard two-cabin layout, with optional teak deck and uprated 30hp engine with bow thruster



I tested the GT35 on a grey blustery day, the kind of day the average sailor avoids; only the stalwarts and passagemakers were out with us on the water. But then this boat was not designed for the average day sailor.

The principles of quality, seaworthiness and strength are core to the GT35. This British concept, design and build was created to stand up to serious and safe ocean sailing. That is not just what the brochure says, it is evident everywhere you look. My big question was whether such sensible shoes would weigh down a 35-footer. Does being safe mean no fun?

Heading straight out into a Force 7 on the Solent, the GT made its best effort to show me

that you can dance in sensible shoes. Beating towards Cowes through a Solent chop, the boat felt alive; there was power enough for us to punch through waves. It was nimble and pleasant to helm, making an average speed of 6.3 knots upwind.

You can feel the weight of the GT, but this does not come back at you through the wheel; in the wind range I experienced the boat felt balanced and muscly, yet not cumbersome. From the back of the boat I felt cocooned and secure in the fully enclosed cockpit. With the sprayhood up, I had to sit out to feel the wind on my face and there was no chance of being peppered with spray as we bullied our way upwind.

Founder of GT Yachts Conrad Cockburn



ON TEST: GT35

(a naval architect) has teamed up with designer Stephen Jones to address what he sees as a gap in the market for a quality 30-50ft, no-compromise cruiser. The end result is being built by Windboats – former builder of Oyster yachts – in Norfolk.

Hand-built British quality like this comes at a price and, at £240,500 ex VAT, the GT is restricted to a niche market. In the words of Stephen Jones: "The design requirement is not intended to be wholly revolutionary, but to provide a secure-feeling, steady range of yachts that are strong, fast and sensible."

Having lived aboard a yacht myself for many years I was intrigued to see if their idea of steady cruising matched mine.

Comfort at sea

The GT looks modern, has reasonably high freeboard and visibly carries beam forward in the boat. However, on a second look the enclosed transom and high cockpit coamings give an indication this boat has been designed with comfort at sea in mind.

The deck is simple and clean, with lines – including the roller furler – leading back below deck and flush hatches. The coachroof leaves plenty of room to walk comfortably to the foredeck. A bosun's locker forward is a feature rarely seen on a boat of this size, and is deep with ample room for ground tackle and fenders. It doubles as a floodable crash section, separated from the forward cabin by a watertight bulkhead. Another watertight bulkhead separates the rudder shaft from the aft cabin and large cockpit locker.

The GT35 has a relatively high angle of vanishing stability (AVS) of 144° and STIX value of 54, which again point to its seaworthiness offshore. These are partly down to the increased amount of lead ballast placed low in the keel. To provide the strength to support this, key areas of the hull are reinforced with carbon fibre.

All the attention to detail, extra strength and stability, of course, come at a cost – and that's weight. At 7.2 tonnes the GT is over a tonne heavier than some of its rivals. This is redressed with a larger sail plan.

As standard the GT35 comes with a mainsail and a furling genoa. Optional extras include provision for an inner forestay – an absolute must if heading offshore, in my opinion – and a self-tacking pack for a non-overlapping headsail.

Sail trials

I trialled the boat in gusty conditions, beating towards Cowes in winds ranging between 20 and 30 knots true. Upwind in over 24 knots the GT35 was more comfortable with a reef, which was easily put in thanks to sensibly placed winches, single-line slab-reefing (standard) and lazyjacks (optional). All this was done in comfort from behind the

- 1** The GT 35 comes with a double bow roller as standard, one side of which is designed to fit the Selden Gennaker Bowsprit should you choose that option
- 2** The mainsail is controlled via a German mainsheet arrangement with winches close to the helmsman's position on both sides and a full-width track across the centre of the boat. A regular block and tackle mainsheet is also available
- 3** An optional sprayhood stows neatly into the deck moulding and there is the option to have a fixed windscreen
- 4** A large cockpit locker is an essential for long-distance cruising; this one does not disappoint, with room for sails, dinghies, spares galore
- 5** The two optional pushpit seats would undoubtedly become the chosen positions while sailing



▲ Above: a neatly engineered bathing platform is made by dropping the transom down and removing part of the helmsman's seat

sprayhood. Likewise, tacking was easy and the sheets could comfortably be handled in the cockpit by one person.

A full-width wheel allows steering from virtually any position, but is a little cumbersome to get around. Slide-away helm seats and well-placed foot wedges allow any number of sit-down, stand-up or leaning positions to windward or to leeward.

Comfort has also been considered for the often-forgotten crew. An entirely enclosed cockpit with high coamings gives security and ergonomic shape, offering



decent back support while feet can brace on the seats opposite.

Though I appreciated the full width of the traveller I found it hard to adjust while under way; the loads on it were quite high and I found it difficult to reseat the rope while steering. Perhaps the cleats need to be angled up a little to make this action easier.

Off the wind we had every excuse to shake out the reefs and the boat made an easy 7 knots in a dying breeze of 18 knots. Both reaching and running the test boat made comfortable speed in moderate winds



◀ **Left:** the cockpit is deep and comfortable. A single large wheel allows steering from almost any position, but is a little cumbersome to get round



ON TEST: GT35

and, though pleasant, I found it unremarkable. But the GT35 was designed for steady, sensible cruising and in the conditions we experienced it met this brief.

For those who might like a bit more excitement off the breeze I felt the boat could easily handle more sail area. There are suitable points on the toerail where headsails could be led outboard for reaching and among the optional extras is a OneSails package, which could include an offshore main, furling Code 0 or a cruising chute. Personally I feel the versatility of the Code 0 would offer added upwind power in superlight airs and a lot of fun reaching.

The test boat had an upgraded 30hp engine with a varifold propeller and optional bow thruster. We motored fast with no effort against the incoming tide down the Hamble River. The boat was equally responsive manoeuvring in a blustery wind.

Below decks

I was impressed with the GT below. Some bold decisions have been made to provide a functional and comfortable boat, in particular the choice of sacrificing one aft cabin in favour of a sensibly placed, large heads and an enormous cockpit locker. The feeling of solidity and strength remained while the boat was crashing through Solent chop upwind; nothing creaked, and lockers/cabin doors opened and closed smoothly.

The attention to detail and consideration for living aboard and spending time at sea absolutely shone through. The oak finish with solid grabrails provides a contemporary feel and there are handholds aplenty and over 6ft of headroom throughout.

The saloon is forward of the galley and has a permanent table in the centre with settee berths on both sides and stowage outboard. There is undoubtedly a compromise on space with this set-up, however anyone who has run the gauntlet trying to get across an empty saloon at sea and ended up hanging off a grabrail may feel the compromise is justified.

Bringing the forward cabin a little bit further aft in the boat has given the master cabin dimensions for a decent-sized berth, with room to stand. Stowage is in hanging lockers and below the berth.

The galley is large with plenty of worktop. Inboard of the sink this extends to the centreline, providing a well-placed anchor for crew coming down the companionway. At the bottom of the companionway you are straight into a neat triangle of heads, galley and navigation area; so there is no need for wet crew to trail through the boat.

The heads has plenty of room to stand up, shower or take off foulweather gear. Behind the fore and aft-mounted toilet is a wet-locker, which has an outlet from the engine room blower. I jammed myself into the forward-facing navstation while sailing



upwind and was able to brace myself on both tacks with ample room to work.

Knowing the pain of squeezing my body into unnatural shapes with a torch in my mouth and only one hand free to work with, I was pleased to see that access to wiring, plumbing, engine and steering has been given as much consideration as the rest of the boat. The electrical wiring throughout is

run through dedicated conduits, which are not jam-packed full. There is even a chain running through the limber holes in the structural beams under the floorboards to keep them free of boat fluff.

Maintenance access for the engine is via the companionway and knuckle room has been allowed. All through-hull fittings are easily accessed and toilet plumbing also.

▲ **Top:** a practical and solid-feeling saloon with plenty of handholds.

▲ **Above left:** large, workable galley.

▲ **right:** forward master cabin



► Right: the GT35 felt comfortable and secure in a Force 7 in the Solent

DATA GT35

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	10.70m	35ft 0in
LWL	10.00m	32ft 10in
Beam (max)	3.60m	11ft 10in
Draught	1.95m	6ft 5in
Disp (lightship)	7,500kg	16,535lb
Ballast	2,810kg	6,195lb
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	67m ²	722ft ²
Berths	6	
Engine	25hp	
Water	230lt	51gal
Fuel	230lt	51gal
Sail area: disp	18	
Disp: LWL	210	
Price (ex VAT)	£240,500	
Designed by: Stephen Jones		
www.gtyachts.com		

Pip joins the test team

Pip Hare joins the *Yachting World* team from this month as a consulting editor. Pip is a professional skipper, Yachtmaster examiner and sailing coach with a diverse experience of racing and ocean sailing. She also works on coastal safety for the RNLI.

She has cruised extensively round Britain, transatlantic and to South America, but her passion is solo and short-handed offshore racing. She is a class winner of the Two-Handed Round Britain and Ireland, has raced in the OSTAR and twice across the Atlantic in one of sailing's most demanding events, the Mini Transat race.

She is also the author of our feature and video series *Sail Safer, Sail Faster*.



Conclusion

GT stands for Grand Tour and this boat has definitely been designed with that concept in mind. I was hugely impressed with the level of understanding and attention to detail that has gone into making this boat fit its design brief. It will appeal to any sailor who knows the pain of cruising on a boat designed for the harbour.

But at around £300,000 on the water this is an expensive boat, more so in fact in comparative terms than established quality brands with high resale values, including the Xc35 and even the HR372.

In a survey recently conducted on the motivations

of yachtsmen, 'freedom' came out as the top reason why we sail. For me freedom is endless sky and ocean, no boundaries and feeling the elements on my skin. The GT35 did not make me feel that way. I felt secure and protected and perhaps a little mollycoddled. I understand and appreciate the GT for what it is, but it is not the boat for me.

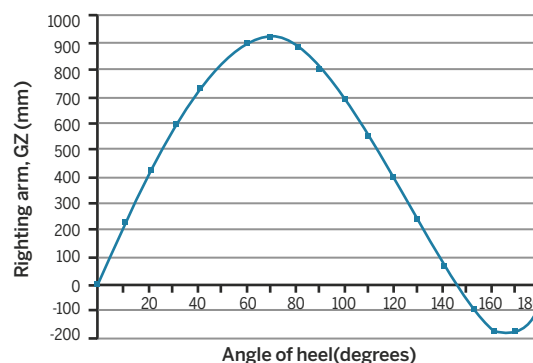
Of course, a quick blast up and down the Solent is not a just reflection of the GT35's capabilities. I'm sure the consideration to layout and ease of sailing would really come to life when cooking dinner during a wet night-time beat, or watching the sunrise from a dry cockpit on a rough crossing – perhaps even I wouldn't be so keen to connect with the elements then.

SEE THE VIDEO

yachtingworld.com/gt35video



Or scan this code with your phone or tablet to access the GT35 video



NEW YACHTS

BRENTA 80DC

Big names for the new Brenta

This new 80ft carbon cruiser is a clever concept created by former Hanse Yachts owner Michael Schmidt with input from top names

Big names may draw the crowds to the red carpets, but they don't always guarantee success. The fact that Italian style icon Brenta Design is behind this new carbon cruiser, plus a certain world-renowned architect – Sir David Chipperfield's first foray into boat design – will certainly help cultivate interest in this arresting new sloop.

Lorenzo Argento, designer and now director of Brenta Design, has produced a very clever concept for this 80-footer: a triple-level deck that creates a sunken centre cockpit. And while there are only a few images to go on so far, Chipperfield's interior looks understated, yet practical and sympathetic to the exterior lines.

However, it is the third name behind this

new Brenta 80DC that will perhaps be the most intriguing. The vision behind the design, the owner of the yard and the first boat to be built is former Hanse Yachts owner Michael Schmidt. After four decades in the yacht production business, Schmidt sold Hanse Yachts in 2011 and went cruising for two years aboard his Hanse 630.

Wanting to upsize, he could not find a yacht to match his wishes, which included modern looks with classic features, a yacht with simple systems that is easy to sail fast and to maintain. So he formed a new luxury custom yacht building company, Michael Schmidt Yachtbau, based in his hometown of Greifswald where Hanse also remains.

"There is so much infrastructure here and we know all the suppliers," says the

A novel take on the centre-cockpit design, this 80ft carbon cruiser has three decks

typically laid-back Schmidt. He stresses that the difference between his new venture and his production boatbuilding days is that he wants to do only a small number of high-end luxury products and to keep them simple.

The first will be this contemporary 80-footer, no 1 of which is being built for Schmidt himself and will launch in the early summer. It is a fast cruiser designed for bluewater, yet will be fun to sail with minimal crew. Designer Argento explained how the requirement for an extra-large master cabin led him to produce this novel take on the age-old centre-cockpit design.

Argento sketched a simple three-deck concept when they met up at Monaco Yacht Show in 2013. "Michael wanted 600mm bulwarks, so we worked at the idea of having

NEW YACHTS

with Toby Hodges



DIMENSIONS

LOA 23.99m/78ft 9in
LWL 21.75m/71ft 4in
Beam 6.00m/19ft 8in
Draught fixed keel 3.50m/11ft 6in
Displacement 30,900kg/68,122lb

a flush foredeck while keeping bulwarks aft," Argento explained, pointing out that Brenta and Wally have used bulwarks to great effect for 25 years. The result is that the deck tiers up from a protected aft terrace to a foredeck with just 100mm of bulwark.

This creates innovative aesthetics with a coachroof that sinks into the deck aft, so the superstructure appears ultra low-profile, barely noticeable from water level. "The low-profile deckhouse rests behind the bulwark like a cottage behind a hedgerow," is how Argento quaintly puts it.

Argento's concept was enough to attract one of his notable past clients to the project. Sir David Chipperfield is a keen sailor and Brenta 42 owner, who appreciated the potential. "I adapted the interior to a comfortable interpretation of the exterior that interacts with the architecture of the yacht," he said. The furniture features rounded corners and padded surfaces that are practical at sea. He deliberately left the framework exposed, "avoiding domestic stereotypes," he explained.

Future clients will be able to specify a custom interior or the Chipperfield design. The furniture is being built in carbon sandwich. Carbon was specified throughout because Schmidt wanted to keep weight

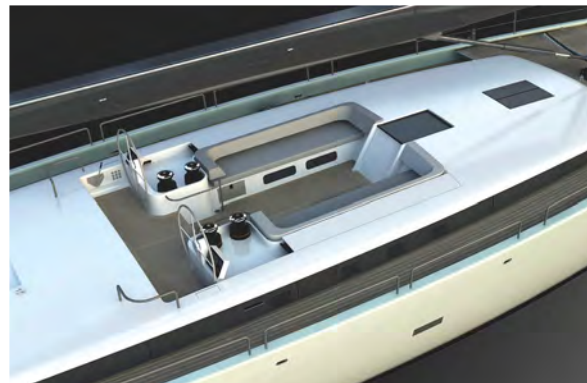
down. "It's nice to have a boat that can accelerate fast and do 13-15 knot speeds – cruising is easier, deck fittings are all lighter." Performance is key to Schmidt, an ex-Admiral's Cup sailor and still a talented Dragon competitor.

Hulls are produced at Rega in Poland, a yard with a name for specialising in composite hull production – clients include Vismara, Comet and Mylius (see page 68). They are then fitted out at Schmidt's new facility in Greifswald. When pushed on pricing, Schmidt says the Brenta 80 will work out significantly less than a Swan and only a little more than a CNB 76 when taking into account full specifications. Potentially around the €4m (£3.1m) mark then.

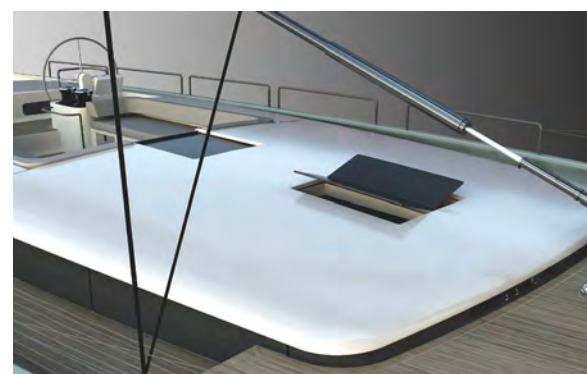
Three versions of the Brenta 80 are offered: a centre-cockpit like this first model, an aft cockpit or a deck saloon. Also in design is a 100ft version and a day powerboat of around 42ft.

Is Michael Schmidt moving into Wally territory? "For us this is a hobby," says Schmidt. "We are doing it because we love boats and the nicest thing is to create boats and see how they work out... and it's a nice way to finish off my career, to do a luxurious product that I can put passion and heart into."

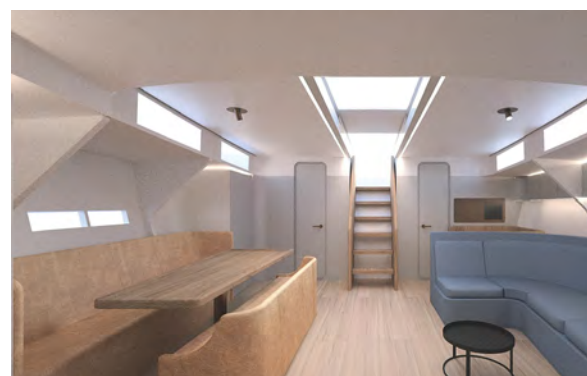
Price circa £3m. www.msyachtbau.com



The stepped deck creates a deep, long centre cockpit. A step has been tested to facilitate access between cockpit and side deck



Note how low the coachroof is to the foredeck, but the step creates height further aft. Grilles allow portholes to be opened



Chipperfield-designed interior – his first foray into yacht design – features rounded shapes and padded surfaces



The prime benefit of a centre-cockpit design is the aft cabin space. From here an owner can access the huge aft deck terrace

NEW YACHTS



DIMENSIONS

LOA 23.25m/76ft 3in
LWL 21.00m/68ft 11in
Beam 5.84m/19ft 2in
Draught 4.15m/13ft 7in
Displacement
 30,000kg/66,138lb



ITALIA YACHTS 9.98

Certain production yachts can be guaranteed to provide pleasure on the helm. These tend to have derived from racing hearts and minds – X-Yachts and J-Boats spring to mind. Italia Yachts is another and, in this 9.98, the Venice-based yard is unleashing a pent-up racer-cruiser.

The 34-footer was drawn by Italia's Matteo Polli, a 34-year-old protégé of ORC expert Maurizio Cossutti. It is based on the M37, a successful ORC racer, though smaller to reduce running costs and loads.

The hull is the result of numerous computational fluid dynamics (CFD) and VPP analyses. It is designed to try to rate well in both ORC and IRC.

So it has slender hull lines for poled-out spinnaker performance downwind, combined with a waterline that increases significantly when heeled.

The stability, sailplan and displacement (up to 500kg) can be adapted to suit a specific rule and its annual changes. In this way, it is more a custom racer-cruiser than a production yacht. Below it looks basic, but suitable for weekend cruising with two cabins, one heads and fabric wardrobes.

Price ex VAT €119,000 (£93,000).
www.italiayachts.it

MYLIUS 76

Mylius produces the pin-ups of the production yacht world. Since its acquisition by packaging company Group Twinpack three years ago, the Italian brand has been quietly turning out a range of super-sleek and modern fast cruisers from 50-76ft.

Like the Brenta 80 (page 66) the carbon hulls are built at the Rega yard in Poland, before being fitted out in Mylius's new yard in Podenzano, Italy. So although they look as if they might cost the Moon, Mylius yachts are actually comparatively economical – for those in the market for a carbon bullet with an interior that looks as if it's been designed at NASA.

The 76 is once more drawn by Alberto Simeone, the designer who helped found Mylius over a decade ago. It is sleek, powerful and sexy, with straight ends and a rig that reaches for the sky. Think outrageous sail area, including a 500m²



gennaker, and it's no surprise that the polars for this lightweight dart show her hitting the early teens in 20 knots offwind.

The deck saloon version allows a slight graceful rise in superstructure over an otherwise billiard table flat deck. This deck saloon version is the first in build, but Mylius is building two flush deck models this year, also offered in a three or four-cabin layout.

The fact that Mylius can produce carbon cruisers for a lot less than big yards such as Swan goes some way to explaining its current popularity.

Price ex VAT €2,650,000 (£2,068,930).
www.mylus.it

**Sleek, powerful
and sexy 76**

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NEW GEAR

Astra Esa smartwatch

£311

What is it? A wrist-mounted watch/smartphone/display for those on the move. **Contact:** www.astrayacht.com

SEE THE VIDEO



Scan here to see the company's own video

This is the first smartwatch I have seen that is designed for sailing – and it's as neat to use as it looks, fusing the sailor's thirst for gadgetry with high-street technology. The Esa watch means you can view your instruments on your wrist – if at a rather dinky size. It uses wi-fi to connect to onboard instruments so the watch can display performance information.

The Esa watch has pre-installed software to allow it to show real-time performance data including TWA, speed and polar target data. It will also function autonomously using its own built-in GPS, including an excellent pre-start screen that includes time to burn. It is possible to use both an existing onboard router or Astra's own Gamp multiplexer.

This is not to forget, however, that the Esa watch is still essentially a smartphone, offering full Android capabilities. So it includes a SIM card for calls, text and email, as well as a camera, so can be used just like a modern mobile. The fact that it is wrist-mounted may suit those on the move, whether on the foredeck, or up the rig.

The small screen size does make it a bit fiddly to operate for those, like me, who lack dainty digits. But the resolution is crisp enough to make for a quick and novel way to glance at the numbers.

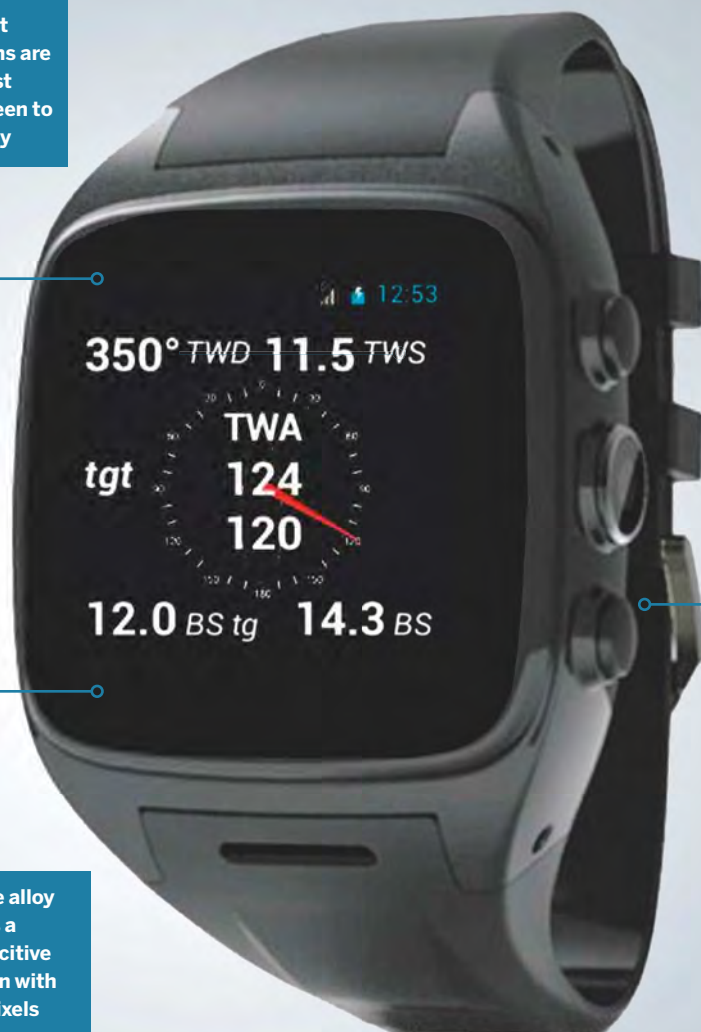
The watch is waterproof and shockproof, is available in three colours – and I'm rather put out that I didn't get one for Christmas.

Price €399 (£311) for the watch and app and €400 (£312) for the multiplexer

Eight different display screens are available – just swipe the screen to change display

The durable alloy chassis has a 1.54in capacitive touchscreen with 240x240 pixels

A SIM card in the watch means it can be used for email and phone calls too



OTHER SMARTWATCHES

Aquaracer 72

TAG Heuer developed this Aquaracer 72 smartwatch especially for Team Oracle to use in the 2013 America's Cup. The Android watch used custom software and wi-fi to connect with the network on the AC72 and display instrument data. The neat part is that TAG Heuer customised the watches for each crewmember to display the various data they wanted, including true wind info, foil balance and sail pressure. The bad news is that only 50 were produced and they are not available for resale. www.tagheuer.com





Bad Elf GPS Pro+

The delightfully named US company Bad Elf has been producing a range of GPS receivers for the past five years. Its first was an ultra-compact GPS chip designed for iOS devices. But its compact Bluetooth GPS receivers are more practical, especially for providing accurate position data for those using electronic charts on mobiles and tablets.

The GPS Pro+ Receiver is accurate to within 2.5m globally. It includes a digital barometer and a USB connection for streaming NMEA 0183 data for charting apps, especially for Apple products. Up to five devices can share the position data simultaneously. The palm-sized device weighs 91g.

Price US\$299.99 (£198).

www.bad-elf.com



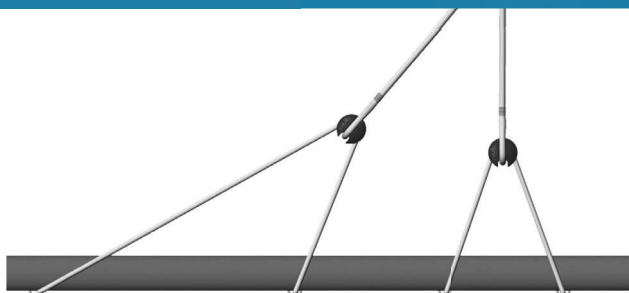
Seasmart removable pad-eye

Most sailors will testify to the annoyance, pain and occasional mess of stubbing a toe on a deck fitting. Removable pad-eyes can make a neat solution.

Seasmart in Italy designs and makes some beautiful deck fittings, many of which – from fenders to sprayhoods as well as this new pad-eye – are designed to integrate with its clever Smartlock system. This quick-locking female deck plug locks or unlocks by simply pushing the central button.

The pad-eye is available in silver-anodised aluminium for working loads up to 1,000daN, or 316L stainless steel for three times the load capacity (for three times the weight penalty).

Price €196 (£153) for the complete aluminium set. www.seasmart.it



The Nub

The Nub puts a new, circular twist on the age-old rope pulley – a simple, lightweight and economic plastic design that can take great loads with minimal friction. A 16g Nub, for example, can hold more than four tonnes of static weight and can be fixed to a preloaded rope. A 10mm Dyneema line used during testing reportedly snapped before the Nub showed any signs of strain while under 4.7 tonnes of load.

The Nub's design is also inherently secure as, if the polyplastic body does fail, the moving sheet will be held by the static sheet. It is the brainchild of Michel Sauget of Delta Sails and François Angoulvant, president of the Class 40 association, who tested out the invention by equipping his own 40 with 18 Nubs.

Price €39.90 (£30.50) for two. www.nub-connectics.com





Flattens

Furling battens are designed to roll up smoothly yet provide a stable shape when extended, rather like a tape measure. But they tend to come with the compromise of neither matching the performance of a solid batten, nor allowing the tight furl of a non-battened sail.

Primrose Fry Technologies thinks it has found the solution by using an advanced patented material developed for the military. The result, the company says, is that these Flattens have enough bend and compression stiffness to allow added roach to be designed into new sails.

It is also claimed that Flattens will boost performance in all types of headsails in all conditions. The leech reportedly remains controllable and the furl can be tighter than a sail with no battens. Flattens are available for jibs on boats from 20ft to 55ft.

Price on application.

www.PF-Technologies.com



Journey 1 Hyndsight Vision

This camera and monitor system was originally developed to help rowers avoid accidents and envisage where they are going without needing constantly to turn around. As yachts get larger, longer, higher and beamier, blind spots from the helm occur increasingly. The Journey 1 is a wireless (so removable), waterproof camera and monitor system that produces a clear video image with true depth of field from up to 300ft away. For larger vessels, up to three additional cameras can be paired to one monitor for full 360° viewing.

Price US\$499 (£329). www.hyndsightvision.com

A QUICK LOOK

Gill Regatta Race Timer

Getting a good start is crucial in any race. This watch is designed to make the pre-start numbers as intelligible as possible. Gill says its new Regatta Race Timer has the largest and clearest display (26.5mm) on the market today. The countdown timer has an easy-synchronise function, loud audible alerts and a key lock function. The 50m water-resistant watch can be wrist, bracket or mast-mounted.

Price £70. www.gillmarine.com



Ostrich Pillow

As single-handed sailors will testify, taking a power nap is good for you. So as long as you have the space to carry one, and you are not at all self-conscious, this Ostrich Pillow might appeal. It's a cosy, wearable pillow that goes over your head with holes for your face and hands. You'll look daft, but feel comfy.

Price US\$99 (£65).

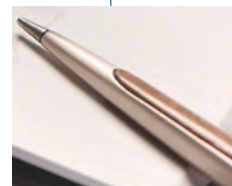
www.studiobananathings.com



Forever Pininfarina Cambiano – inkless pen

Behold the pen that never runs out of ink. Rarely does a humble piece of stationery receive such love, but this Italian 'limitless writing instrument' is as clever as it is beautifully designed. The aluminium body with walnut inserts features an alloy tip that leaves a mark on paper like the precise stroke of a pencil, but is indelible. A water-resistant stone powder notebook is also available. I never thought I'd yearn for a pen – no, pencil – so much.

Price €89 (£70). www.pininfarina.com



Waterproof socks and gloves

Cold, wet feet are the pits, yet waterproof socks have tended to disappoint over time. This new DexShell range of socks, gloves and hats promises complete water- and wind-proofing thanks to the incorporation of a British-designed breathable membrane and three-ply construction. An outer Nylon Spandex helps them to stretch in two directions, and a merino wool inner should keep toes toasty.

Price £33.99.

www.nauticalia.com





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Our panel puts the latest products through their paces

Iridium GO!

£615

What is it? Satellite wi-fi that allows mobile use for anyone sailing long distances beyond VHF and terrestrial mobile phone coverage

Contact: www.iridium.com www.globaltelesat.co.uk



This appealing alternative to a satellite phone is a compact device that functions in much the same way as a MiFi hub for terrestrial mobile data, but with the addition of a facility for voice calls, SMS text messaging and an SOS facility.

An additional benefit, which will appeal to anyone other than light users, is the option of buying unlimited data for just US\$125 per month. It's the only Iridium device with this offer, which is priced at around two hours' worth of data connection at typical pay-as-you-go rates.

It therefore represents a huge cost saving, although with the speed capped at the industry standard of 2.4kbps (four per cent of the speed of old-fashioned dial-up internet) it's still a long way from fully unlimited web access.

The unit is easy to set up and activated simply by rotating the antenna 90° into the upright position. Communication with tablets or smartphones is via wi-fi – we found the unit produced a consistently strong signal. The interface is then via two free apps that need to be downloaded in advance – Iridium GO! for voice and SMS text messaging, and Iridium Mail for email and web browsing.

An additional cost saving is that the third-party data compression service that is normally needed for satphone data connections is not required, which saves a further monthly fee.

We tried the Iridium GO! first using an iPad 2, which functioned flawlessly. As default, the system is set such that only emails of less than 50kb are downloaded, along with the headers of larger ones, allowing users to select which (if any) of the bigger ones they want to download. Given the data speed, the system is intended only for looking at basic mobile websites. Even then, the recommendation is to do so via the Opera Mini browser, which offers a compression option that can reduce data requirements by up to 90 per cent. Again this worked well, with pages downloading surprisingly quickly given the slow data rate.

Next we tried it with a Nexus 5 mobile phone running Android 4.4.2, which was similarly straightforward to set up. However, it appeared to suffer from one bug, in which the header obscured the top four lines of emails. As with tablet, when making calls it's the Iridium GO's SIM and phone number that are used, not the mobile phone.

There is also an SOS button on the unit that will send your position, plus an emergency message, to

a user-defined group of contacts. In addition, there's a tracking function that automatically sends regular position updates to anyone you choose. Finally, there's a growing list of third party apps designed to integrate with the system, such as Predict Wind Offshore.

An external antenna is the single most useful accessory for use afloat – this will enable the unit to be kept dry below deck, with the antenna located where it can get a good view of the sky. However, the unit is water-resistant to IP65, so for occasional use in good weather it could be placed on deck and the addition of a drybag would give it protection in more severe conditions.

Verdict

A mostly intuitive and thoroughly useful piece of kit that has the potential to change the face of satellite communications for small and medium-sized yachts, particularly given the option for access to unlimited data. We also understand that the Iridium GO! will be compatible with the new Iridium Next satellite constellation that will offer considerably faster data speeds when it comes on line in 2017. **RH**

9/10

Our regular test panel



Pip Hare
Pro ocean racing sailor/Yachtmaster instructor



Ross Applebey
Skipper of *Scarlet Oyster*, now doing Caribbean season



Henry Bomby
Young offshore solo sailor. Figaro circuit for three years



Rupert Holmes
Sailing journalist and short-handed offshore sailor



Philippe Falle
Yachtmaster examiner. Runs racing charter



Matthew Sheahan
Yachting World's Technical and Racing Editor

D-Splicer kit and scissors



£35.99/£34.99

Who's it for? Those working with or wanting to splice modern fibre, thinner ropes.

Contact: www.d-splicer.com www.allspars.co.uk

When faced with a splicing job where a fid won't work I, like most innovative sailors, will reach for a cable tie, or bent wire and electrical tape to find a solution. The D-Splicer kit offers

a more professional approach in the form of four different-diameter wire needles with an interchangeable handle designed specifically for splicing narrow-diameter ropes; and it works.

Although recommended for ropes smaller than 4mm, the larger needles without the handle are man enough for bigger jobs, though undoubtedly this would bend them in time.

The needles are flexible, effective and simple to use – I did not bother with the handle most of the time as with small jobs there really is no need and I can't imagine I would bother to change it over. However, the handle design has been given some consideration – it is textured, a comfortable size to grip and has a rope hoop

on the end, meaning that for those 'harder to pull through' jobs you have something to heave on and a lanyard point if working over the water.

The D-Splicer range also includes a pair of high carbon stainless steel scissors (sold separately for £34.99) which slice through 6mm Dyneema in one clean action, but anything over 10mm requires a bit of 'chewing' and the handles start to flex.

Perhaps unintentionally, this Dutch company has created a very handy universal tool, coming in very useful for all manner of hook and grab jobs – including fishing mousing lines out of masts or wires from cable trays. Personally, I found the handle a little superfluous so might not chose to buy the whole kit but would, without a doubt, include one of the single replacement needles (£5.50) in my own tool box. **PH**

7/10

PROtect Tapes: Skid and LoopX

£17.50/£22.99

Who's it for? Those needing a bit of extra grip on deck or super-light soft attachments for deck fittings (a reinvention of the shackle)

Contact: www.protect-tapes.com
www.allspars.co.uk

PROtect Tapes specialises in making products to combat chafing, friction, abrasion, scratches, damage, ageing and wear on board boats by working with specialists in polymers, technical films and adhesives, as well as professional sailors. I trialled two products on board my Figaro: Skid and LoopX.

Skid is the same product you will find fitted on the cockpit floors of most TP52s and other grand-prix raceboats. While unforgiving on the knees, it is a fantastically durable grip tape that, in the five months I have been testing it, hasn't lost any

of its 'grippiness'. It sticks well to the cockpit floor and is genuinely of the highest quality.

The product I was most impressed with, however, and perhaps the company's most innovative, is its reinvention of the shackle. Lightweight and super-strong, the LoopX is also a great and simple replacement for the soft shackle. To the untrained eye it can seem unfathomable how they are made.

I really liked the ease of application for the LoopX, with no splicing skills required. But perhaps the biggest plus is that it is extremely lightweight, a big bonus in our offshore racing game – why carry more weight than you need all the way round the course? Plus it looks really cool and racy on board, which I really like!

This is a top-rate company making great products. **HB**

10/10





Chafe, jury rigs and a shark on the rudder

Andy Schell spoke to skippers at the end of the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers in Saint Lucia to find out about this year's gear failures and solutions

The 2014 ARC was an easy one on crews and gear. Although a slower passage, it was noticeably calmer than in 2013, when broken gear – including several broken booms – and torn sails were strewn about the docks in Rodney Bay.

Speaking to the sailors in Saint Lucia after this year's rally, we got a picture of some common gear failures and causes. We also gained an interesting insight into some of the stranger failures and the ingenious MacGyver-like jury rigs that enabled skippers to complete the passage safely.

If there was a theme to the breakages in 2014 it was chafe and torn sails.

"We kept checking everything really," says Simon Pickard from *Interlude I*, a new Hanse 385. "But some things were kind of just hidden in the boom that we didn't see" – namely two of their reefing lines that parted owing to chafe.

Interlude I also lost a Parasailor, but from no fault of the sail itself. The halyard chafed where it entered the mast, something Parasailor representative Thomas Wibberenz says is more common on modern production boats.

"The halyards are not going through a proper articulating leading point for the spinnaker," explains Wibberenz. *Interlude I*, like many modern cruisers, has a solid 'spectacle' lead and, though simple and suitable for round-the-cans racing, Wibberenz says these are not suitable for an Atlantic crossing.

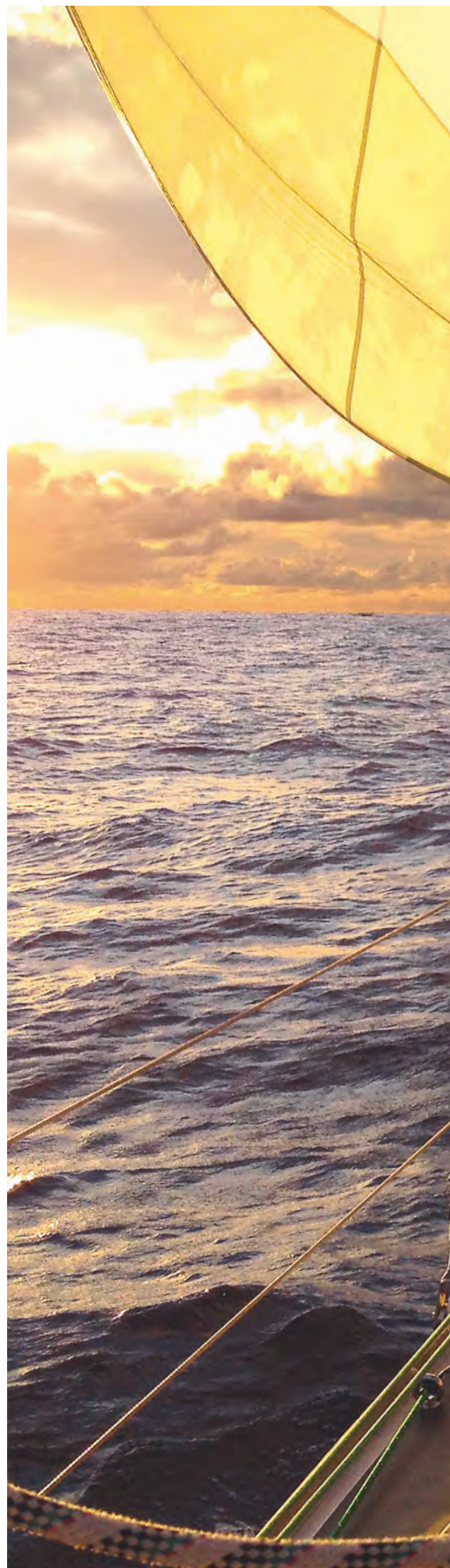
During ARC Europe, the American Shannon 37 *Sojourner* had had a continuing problem with the interior line on their adjustable whisker pole chafing through. It was professionally replaced three times before the ARC. Yet, one day out of Las Palmas, it broke again.

Crewmember Bob Smith set about



◀ **Left:** American yacht *Asylum* under Parasailor shortly after the start.

▼ **Bottom:** same Parasailor after a broach. The double-handed couple on board managed to get it back on the boat and repaired in Saint Lucia. ▶ **Right:** *MeridentOptergo* broad-reaching on a gorgeous day mid-Atlantic





CRUISING

making a jury rig by extending the pole out to the desired length and wrapping it with duct tape, sticky side out. Over that, Smith laced a small line to increase the pole's diameter so it couldn't get sucked into the outer part of the pole and then spiral wrapped it with more duct tape to keep the whole thing in place.

"It didn't move a quarter inch the whole way across," says Smith, and is 'unriggable' to fix the pole permanently later. They used the pole quite a bit, sailing primarily wing and wing with full main and genoa.

There remained the issue of chafe where the genoa sheet led through the jaws of the newly repaired pole. Emboldened by their self-sufficiency, they attached a loop of line to the pole jaws with a snatch block on the



Sojourner, an American Shannon 37 cutter, jury-rigged a whisker pole. Note the block on the end to ease chafe on the genoa sheet

“ I thought we were just slow from being overloaded with water and gear. But the camera showed a huge board stuck on the keel like a snowplough ”

end, running the sheet through it. "It worked like a charm," Smith declares.

MeridentOptergo, a newly built Sailjet 40 from Finland, slowed down for over a week before her owner discovered there was even a problem. "I thought we were just slow from being overloaded with water and gear," says Kari Ulvio. *MeridentOptergo* is a unique boat, a very light displacement hull with a carbon fibre staysail ketch rig and large, light furling sails, so her performance is easily affected by weight distribution. She has a 300hp engine and can plane at over 20 knots under full power.

Increasingly frustrated with the slow progress, Ulvio used an underwater camera to inspect the keel and rudder for debris.

"The camera showed a huge board stuck on the keel like a snowplough," says Ulvio. "Like the ones you use in winter in Finland!"

They stopped the boat and sent a crewmember over the side to remove the board, immediately increasing their speed by a full two knots. They never noticed the impact when the board first became stuck.

Juno of London and *Take Off* also used underwater cameras to help identify rudder issues. Soon after the start, skipper Jorgen Wennberg of the Swedish-flagged *Elan 37 Take Off* noticed some looseness in the helm. The bolts holding the rudder bearing in place were bent and damaged. They made a jury rig by removing them one at a time, drilling out the holes and fitting larger, 8mm bolts in their place.

At that point, it was decision time. "Do we keep going with our newly repaired rudder, wondering if it will happen again?" says Wennberg. "Or do we divert to the Cape Verdes for a proper repair and inspection?"

He phoned his friend Lars 'Lasse'



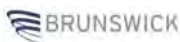
▲ Above: *MeridentOptergo*'s 'snowplough', a huge board found on their keel, as identified by the GoPro, and (top) the crewmember who was sent over the side to free it



▲ Above: *Colombo*'s forestay hanging on by a slim margin of stainless. The skipper noticed the breakage during a routine deck check and immediately furled the sail. They continued under main and lashed halyards to reinforce the headstay. ▼ Below: skipper and crew fixing the broken forestay in Saint Lucia



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CRUISING

Hedman, a boatbuilder and fellow Swede also at sea with the ARC, aboard *Sandvita*, to get a second opinion.

"Well, 8mm, that's got to be good enough," Lasse thought. "Anyhow, if it breaks, we'll pick you up!" At the time *Sandvita* was behind *Take Off*.

Then the boat started making strange vibrations and Wennberg was concerned they'd made the wrong decision in continuing. He stopped the boat and sent a camera over the side.

"So we take the GoPro camera and there it is," Wennberg explains. "Seaweed." During the passage *Take Off* stopped seven more times to remove seaweed from the rudder.

In the end, they needn't have worried about the repair. *Take Off* continued sailing hard, taking a flyer to the south towards the end of the route and jumping from 7th to finish 3rd in Class C. Wennberg and his family crew on *Take Off* were also honoured with the Spirit of the ARC award for their enthusiasm throughout the event.

Even the super-maxi *Leopard* by Finland wasn't immune to bad luck on the crossing. They blew two spinnakers and had a rudder scare of their own.

“This is really true. Half the rudder was in the meat of that fish. It was unbelievable”

"One night we had a loud bang somewhere behind the boat, near the rudder," explains crewmember Timo Lehto. The captain called an all-hands alarm, afraid they'd lost the rudder. They were doing 20 knots or more at the time and the impact was substantial.

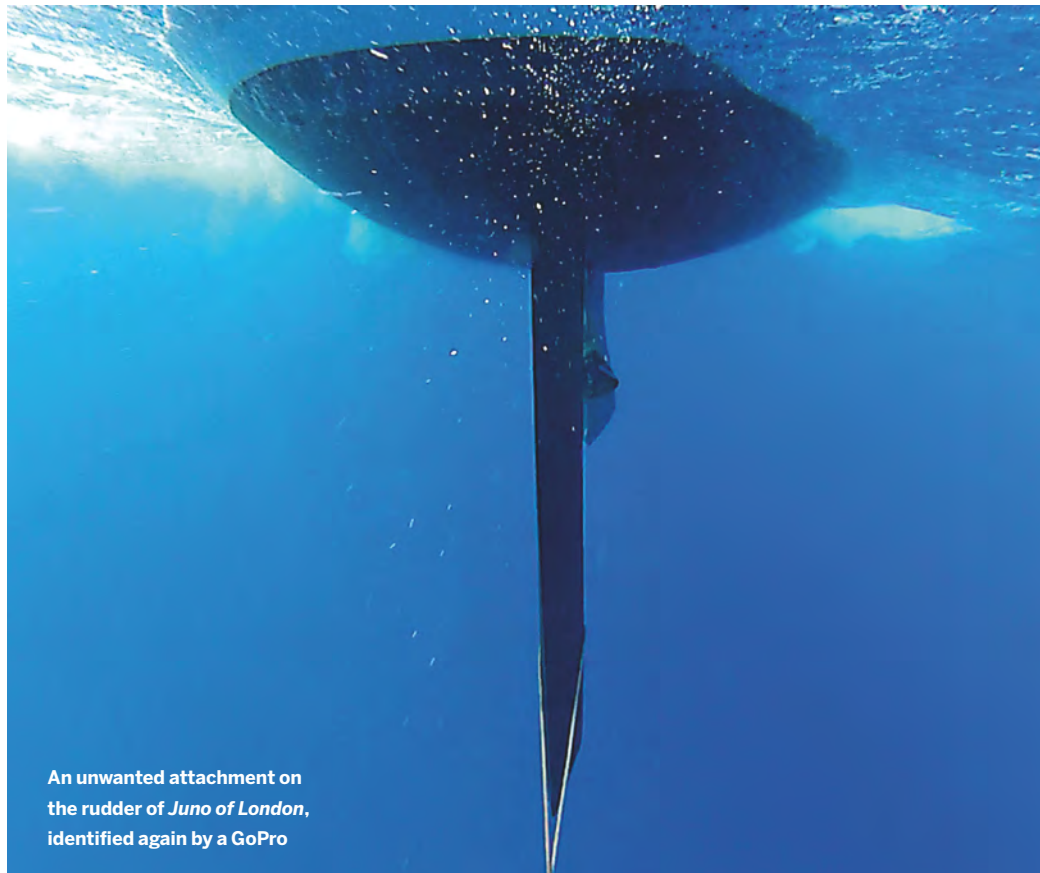
Samuli Leisti, the visionary behind the record-breaking Finnish *Leopard* project, went to investigate with a flashlight and found a 1.5m shark stuck in the rudder blade!

"Yeah, this is not a fish story, this is really true!" exclaims Lehto. "Half of the rudder was in the meat of that fish. It was unbelievable."

They were able to get rid of it without breaking anything, slowing the boat down to do so. "I guess on such a long passage everybody had some bad luck situations," Leisti admits, summing up the thoughts of most of the skippers.

With the technology of cameras like the ubiquitous GoPro, now in its fourth generation, and the relatively low price, it would seem a required piece of kit on any oceangoing boat nowadays. But this year's ARC should also serve as a reminder that there are no substitutes for some old-fashioned ingenuity and elbow grease to get you safely across an ocean.

YW

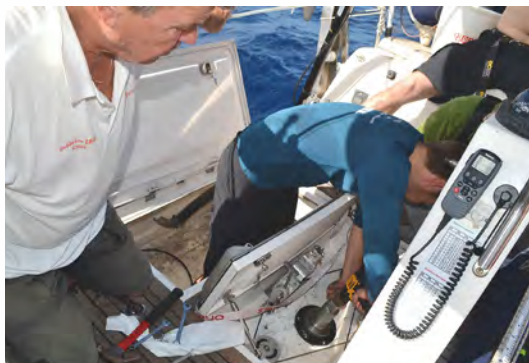


An unwanted attachment on the rudder of *Juno of London*, identified again by a GoPro

Juno of London



Take Off's rudder repair. ◀ Left: the steering system, accessible after removing the cockpit grate. ▶ Below left: hard at work removing bolts and redrilling for new, larger-diameter ones. ▶ Below: the repaired rudder bearing, held in place by 8mm bolts. It held for the remainder of the passage



Photos: *Take Off*

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PART 6

Anchoring in coral

To be avoided wherever possible! But if you do have to anchor in a coral atoll, Dan Bower has some tips

Anchoring in coral is illegal in many places and should certainly be avoided if at all possible. A nice patch of sand is better for holding, better for your ground tackle and considerably better for the environment.

However, there are places and anchorages where you simply don't have an option – and believe me you wish you did!

I am not talking about anchoring in the middle of a pristine reef, but many South Pacific coral atolls are strewn with small coral heads in the anchorage, so even if you manage to land your anchor in a nice sandy patch, the chances are you may get your chain wrapped around one or many, and if

the wind is changeable you can tie the chain in all sorts of knots.

These coral heads usually stick up around a metre from the seabed and it can be difficult to distinguish the height. This is further complicated because many of the anchorages are deep and so it's hard to see what is going on.

There are several problems with this. Coral is hard and can seriously chafe your anchor rode – a rope stands no chance and even chain can take a beating, all the while making a graunching noise which can be felt through your snubber and resonate through the boat to ruin your night's sleep.

With every wrap or snag you effectively

Series author: **Dan Bower**

Dan and Em Bower, both in their thirties, are lifelong sailors. Six years ago they bought *Skyelark of London*, a Skye 51 by American designer Rob Ladd, built in Taiwan in 1986, and have been sailing and chartering her ever since, making some 12 transatlantic crossings and covering 60,000 miles.



An instructional 12 part series in association with Pantaenius



▲ Above: pay out the chain in 10m increments, adding a buoy at each point



▲ Above: clear hand signals to the helmsman means you don't have to shout. ◀ Left: tying on each buoy with large loops and bowlines

shorten your scope, and therefore the catenary effect, or spring, in the chain is diminished. This is what usually absorbs the load when a gust hits the boat or you're anchored in a swell – as the yacht pulls back or the bow rises, the weight of the chain lifting off the seabed takes the brunt and prevents any snatch loading.

The problem with coral snags is that the chain can get so caught and wrapped that the pull becomes straight down. A firmly wrapped chain is very secure and unyielding, but a gust or swell can apply too much shock loading, which can cause real damage and, since the coral is strong, the damage is to the boat. Depending on your

▲ Above: at anchor behind the reef at Mana in Fiji

'weak link', you can snap the snubber or the chain, rip out a cleat or bow roller or, worse, the windlass!

Getting the anchor up can be a real challenge. We have been in anchorages in the Tuamotus and watched (and helped) yachts for up to two hours trying to raise their anchor. In some cases where the water is shallow or clear enough a look below with the snorkel can map out your chain's path and help the helmsman unwind the chain. Otherwise keep someone in the water to watch and guide you or if it's really stuck and unclear, a dive may be required to free it off.

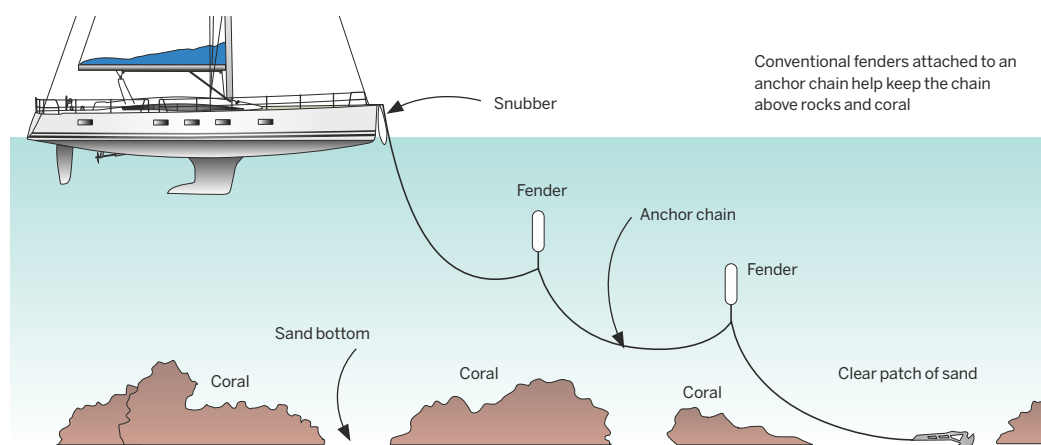
In the tradewind areas, the times the wind is likely to be really shifty is either when

Do's and don'ts

- ✓ Do use floats that won't compress at depth.
- ✓ Do use a heavy-duty 'springy' line for your snubber (anchor plait works well).
- ✓ Do snorkel on the anchor after setting and before raising.
- ✗ Don't anchor in coral at all if it can be avoided.

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it's very light airs (when it's less of a problem) or when a bigger system is approaching. Despite being in a protected lagoon, if the wind blows the wrong way there can be quite a chop.

Rangiroa lagoon, for example, is 40 miles long, the second largest in the world, but most are bigger than the UK's Lake Windermere, so there is plenty of fetch to create a nasty chop and this is when being wrapped around the coral heads is likely to be a serious problem.

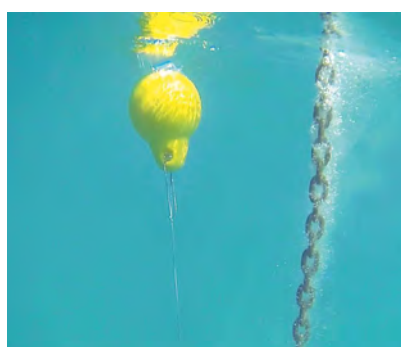
The only sure solution is to have plenty of chain in the locker and keep letting more out as you feel your scope is getting shorter or each time there is an appreciable windshift. Once the weather has improved, work can be done to untangle the knitting. Another option is to use an extra-long rope snubber to bring back some elasticity – a boat length or two of anchor warp tied to the chain and taking the weight would be a last resort.

Buoying the chain

One method that seems to work very well, and has helped us, is to place floats along the anchor chain. These should be just buoyant enough to keep the chain off the bottom and high enough to clear the snagging coral heads, or at least reduce the area affected (see diagram, above).

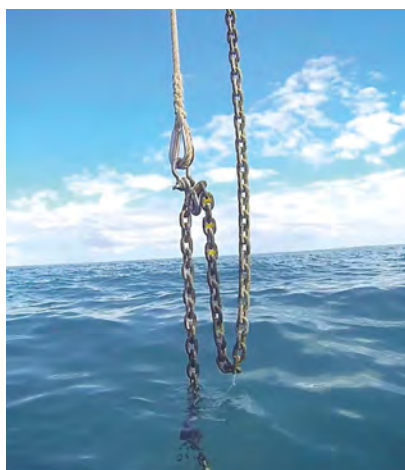
The principle is that you drop your anchor in as clear and sandy a patch as possible; the first 2x the depth is lying on the sea floor, the rest of the scope is then buoyed to lift the chain off the ground. The *Skyelark* formula is to put one buoy every 1x the depth of water up to a scope of 5-1. So in 10m our procedure is drop 20m of chain, then attach a float at 30m and 40m. We stop the chain at 50m.

You must use something fairly sturdy as a float – it is going down to near the seabed and there is a fair amount of pressure at 15-20m. A water bottle will just collapse. We choose the marker floats that are used regularly for fishing buoys and can be freely



◀ **Left: buoys keep the chain clear of the seabed. Just make sure these don't compress**

▶ **Right: a chain hook is one of the easiest ways to attach a snubbing line to the chain**



obtained by picking up the many that litter the windward reefs in the South Pacific from the pearl farms. Another option is to use your fenders – *Skyelark's* are so oversized that they are too buoyant, but it's worth an experiment to see what works for you. We have our buoys on short tethers that you tie to the anchor chain, but an improvement on this would be some quick release carabiners or snapshackles.

Buoying the chain is not completely failsafe, but it will help. The first of the scope is still on the sea floor and may well still get wrapped on a coral head. If you suspect this has happened, you can clip on another buoy and let out another water depth of chain.

TOP TIP

Don't force the chain free with the windlass or excess engine use. Take it slowly and if it gets caught, let out more chain and manoeuvre in a different direction. Be patient!



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The Bluewater Sailing Techniques series carries on from two previous, successful multimedia series we have done in partnership with marine insurance company Pantaenius: the **Sail Safer, Sail Faster** series with solo sailor Pip Hare and our **Storm Sailing Techniques** series with Skip Novak.

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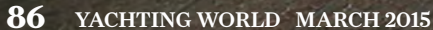
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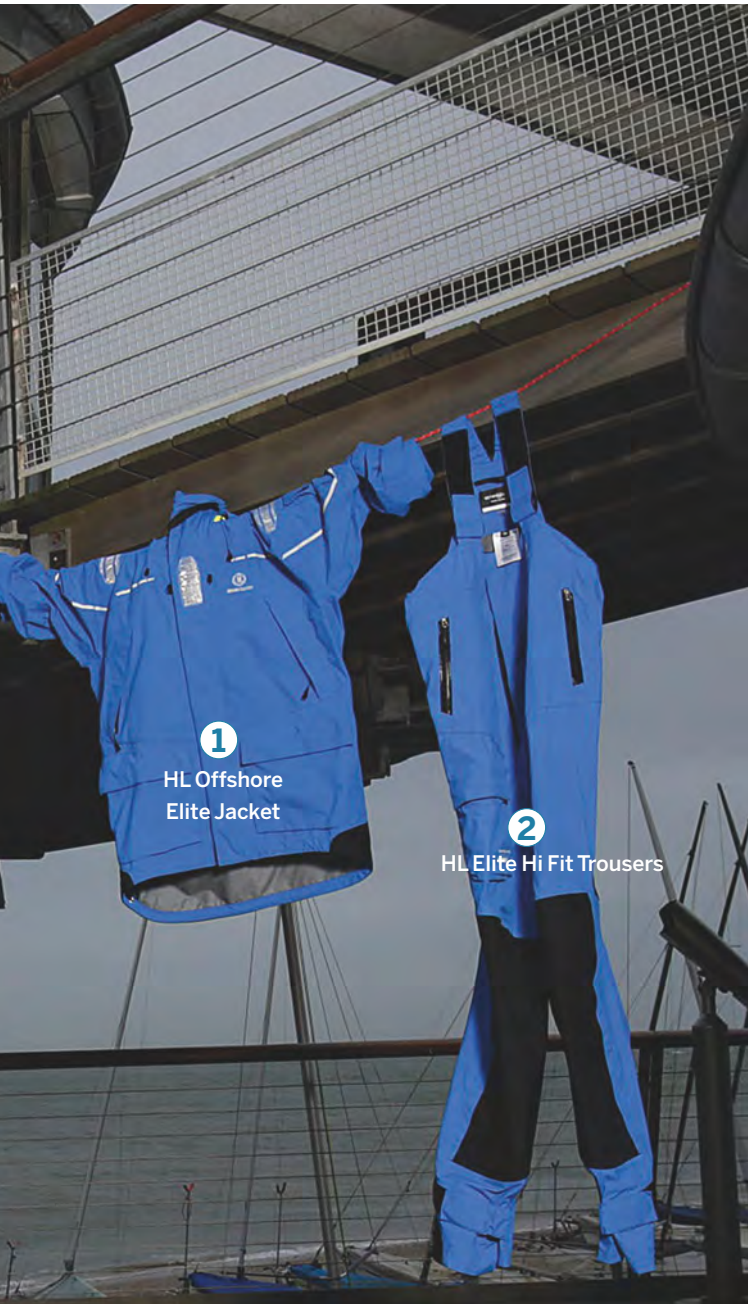
Matt's gear of the year

What our Racing Editor has been wearing

If it ain't broke don't fix it, as the saying goes. When it comes to trying new sailing kit I find it difficult to drag myself away from the items that have worked well during the previous season.

But for the 2014 season even I had to admit that there were some old favourites that were either well beyond their use-by date, or were far too pungent even when dry to share my car with me for the trip to the venue, let alone through airport security.

So this year's kit report for last season is a mixture of the good, the well-used and those that have been given an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.



1

HL Offshore Elite Jacket

2

HL Elite Hi Fit Trousers

1 HL Offshore Elite jacket £485

2 HL Elite Hi Fit trousers £360

For racing at least I thought the days of wearing a jacket were gone; smocks surely were the way ahead. Over the past few years their design, weight and functionality made them far more practical and considerably less bulky than the more familiar front-zipped jacket.

But while Henri-Lloyd's Offshore Elite jacket may look just little different from any of their previous models, the improvement in weight and flexibility is only really noticeable when you're afloat and in the thick of the action. This jacket and trouser combo is not only a big step forward, but versatile enough to take cruising too and the reason why these items barely dried out during 2014.

My only gripe, apart from the eye-watering price, is that there is no bottom-up zip in the trousers – it's a man thing. Interestingly, the Elite set is also available as women's fit. Was I wearing the wrong trousers?

Test term: 12 months

In a nutshell: Extremely versatile, new materials and clever construction.

4 MPX Offshore Race Smock top £499

The latest in a long line of smocks on my sailing kit rail, this is the best of the lot for sportsboat and keelboat racing. Keeping the simple, clean, snag-free approach that has seen an increase in popularity of smock tops, especially aboard modern high-performance raceboats, Musto's Offshore smock top has a tough, durable feel without being cumbersome.

It also includes a pocket you can use while wearing a buoyancy aid and offshore comforts such as a soft neck seal and a decent hood.

Test term: 10 months

In a nutshell: Once on, I'm in for the day.

5 Zhik Deckbeater hiking pants £125

I can't think of a keelboat event that I did last year where these weren't in my kitbag. Sun, bum and shin protection all in one item – perfect and still showing little sign of wear.

Test term: 24 months

In a nutshell: Frequently the only reason I could walk unassisted to the pub after sailing.

3 Zhik Superwarm top/skiff wetsuit £408

Supremely comfortable and surprisingly whiff-free considering how much fear has been channelled through it, this is one of my top items of clothing of the last two years.

There are signs of wear, though: the neck seal is fragile as is the outer shell and some of the stitching is coming apart in places. But on the plus side, the man flap, bomb bay doors continue to allow me to achieve a more relaxed approach to my sailing for the whole day.

Test term: 24 months

In a nutshell: No wetsuit provides a flattering look for an extra medium-sized middle-aged man with a rating bump at his midriff, but this one feels great on the inside.

6 Lizard Spin Deck Boots £159.99

I'm not sure what surprised me most, how good these boots are, or how many people stopped me and asked about them. With no warning, this unknown brand seemed to be the talk of the dockside. I soon found out why.

Soft, light, breathable, grippy and waterproof, these boots are as easy to move about in as a pair of socks. As useful on a RIB as they are inshore or offshore, I was extremely impressed, especially as you can roll them up and pack them in a small bag.

I particularly like the Velcro strap that goes over the top of your foot to pin your heel into the back of the boot, like a ski boot.

My only reservation is that the multiple layers inside make it as easy to



16

Spinlock Deckvest LITE



15

GoPro accessories

Photos: M Austen

PERFORMANCE

put on in the dark as it is to fit a double duvet cover blindfolded. Or is that just a man thing?

Test term: 4 months

In a nutshell: Touch these and you'll see my darker side.

7 Clarks/Musto Orson Drift deck shoe £100

Another welcome surprise in the foot department was Musto's new deck shoe. I'll cut to the chase: this is an excellent shoe. Probably the best deck shoe I've ever worn. They fit like gloves, are soft and pliable yet are still robust enough to withstand being put on the lazy way and have great grip. The weird bobbles in the inner sole feel like a foot massage and take a little getting used to, but they're great.

They're made by Clarks and, in the UK, there is no one who knows more about shoes.

Test term: 5 months

In a nutshell: They don't even smell yet, which isn't all good as it puts them at risk of being stolen.

8 HL Loft jacket £120

First came the gilet, then as the temperature dropped and the nights closed in a version with sleeves arrived at the door. Lightweight, very warm and when combined with a base layer and a light mid-layer the winter never gets in.

Test term: 12 months

In a nutshell: The only problem with this jacket is wearing it out before the sailing season has started – you won't take it off until the clocks go forward.

9 HL H-Therm crew base layer top and bottom £40 each

If you haven't tried a thermal base layer, you have yet to discover how unnecessarily cold, clammy and inappropriate your favourite T-shirts are. There are plenty on the market, but I like these for their glossy sheen, which makes top layers slide over them more easily, allowing freer and easier movement.

Test term: 12 months

In a nutshell: In chilly conditions I'm almost embarrassed to admit how frequently I wear these on and off the water.

10 HL Shadow boot – £185

As sailing clothing gets lighter and easier to move around in, big boots start to feel more cumbersome. I've gone back to one of HL's tried and tested shorter boots. It's easier to sneak past the EasyJet weight police too, particularly if you're wearing them.

Test term: 16 months

In a nutshell: Sometimes simple is best.

11 HL Orion Windstopper jacket £119 trousers £109 shorts £81

Doing precisely what the label says, these three items not only provide an excellent outer shell for everyday use and daysailing, but are waterproof, lightweight and easy to pack. You can just about get away with wearing the

OLD FAVOURITES

17 Scanstrut iLife iPad case £87

A big step forward from an already excellent waterproof case. Much easier to get on and off, and use with waterproof closures for charging data cable and headphone socket.

18 Gill Compressor vest – 7 years

Excellent buoyancy aid and now entering its seventh season of regular use.

19 Garmin Quatix – 18 months

Apart from the normal functions, this navigator's watch is proving to be very useful for post-race/training/testing analysis when looking at the track in detail.

20 Zhik Hydrophobic fleece – 18 months

Works far better than it now looks after a year and a half of abuse.

21 Zhik AroShell smock top – 18 months

Amazing how just one carefully positioned pocket near your shoulder can transform the practicality of a smock top when you're wearing a buoyancy aid on top.



DOWN AND OUT

Gull Championship gloves – 2 years and now counting down the days

Sperry Sea Hiker boots Zips broken, but so good I refuse to stop wearing them. Still available and worth searching out, probably best online

Sperry Searacer shoes – 2½ years Looking tired now, but still my favourite racing deck shoe

trousers off the water too, although you shouldn't take their name too literally; remember, this is breathable kit.

Test term: 8 months

In a nutshell: Their rustle and effectiveness makes you realise what it's like to be a crisp.

12 Hudson Wight HW1 jacket £168.75 trousers £199.00

Before I looked at the price tags I could see that the jacket and trousers were well-designed, well-made, robust, breathable and practical. Once I found the label I was amazed. New to the scene and only available online, there is nothing fancy about the Hudson Wight kit other than it is excellent value for money. The basics are done well, and dealing direct cuts the cost.

Test term: 4 months

In a nutshell: If you gauge value for money by dividing cost by the days used you're going to love these from the start no matter how little sailing you do.

13 Zhik skiff boots £70

Good wetsuit boots, raved about by many of the dinghy sailors, especially on trapeze boats. I like them, particularly for their grip and their snug fit, but found the elasticated lacing up the side fiddly. But then touching my toes is getting harder, as is opening certain food packaging, so it could be just me.

Test term: 18 months

In a nutshell: Good, but if you're the wrong size of 40, give yourself an extra few minutes in the changing room.

14 Musto Dry Backpack 40L £50

Keeping a laptop, tablet and phone from getting wet clearly requires something bigger than a ziplock bag. This is just the ticket.

Test term: 10 months

In a nutshell: This durable and waterproof rucksack kept the Sheahan no claims bonus intact last season.

15 GoPro accessories

While the unit itself is superb, it's actually the range of mounting brackets that have made the big difference. Our favourites are the sucker mount for anywhere on deck and the clamp for stanchions and the masthead.

Test term: 12 months

In nutshell: Fascinating stuff, but when will we see improvements in our results?

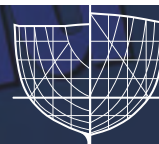
16 Spinlock Deckvest LITE £134.94

I had yet to find anything to beat my tried and tested Deckvest 5D until I wore its lightweight sister. I'm now converted, at least for day and inshore trips. I've ended up using this lifejacket far more than I had expected, especially as it packs down well for travel.

Test term: 12 months

In a nutshell: So light, comfortable and unobtrusive that you have to give yourself a pat down to check you're wearing it.

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PERFORMANCE

BOAT
OF THE
MONTH

VX One

So far there has not been a planing keelboat class to touch the Uffa Fox Flying 15. Could this be the one? Matthew Sheahan is impressed

Ill come straight out with it: there are some boats that hit the spot from the outset and for me the VX One is on that list. In fact, I'll go further. This two- or three-crew 19ft performance keelboat was my favourite boat of 2014. It is, quite simply, superb.

Bridging the gap between dinghies and keelboats has always been tricky. What's good for those used to hiking with their well-trained quads, honed stomach muscles and backsides

▲ **Above: a modern high-performance machine designed with the ordinary sailor in mind**

that only feel right if they keep slapping the tops of the waves is not what will appeal to those more used to hiking facing outwards. For this group, draping their bodies over a 4mm wire like washing on a line, occasionally lifting their sea boots over the waves, is the norm. So the switch from keelboats to dinghies has always proved troublesome and conversely the performance downgrade for dinghy sailors has often been equally unappealing.

Yet back in 1947 Uffa Fox figured out how to tempt both camps when he designed the world's first planing keelboat, the Flying 15.

Blending dinghy performance with keelboat stability, the Flying 15 established a new concept and continues to be the datum in this field, with over 4,000 boats built and a world championship fleet that can still draw up to 100 at a time. There has been no other boat of this type that has been anywhere near as successful. And while many have tried to emulate Fox's success with a more modern boat, no one has yet succeeded on this scale.

Although the VX One looks nothing like the Flying 15, the comparison is a good way of describing what the boat is all about.

With her wide, shallow and open cockpit, complete with toestraps and a smattering of



The simple, uncluttered cockpit of the VX One has been well thought-out. For example, water is shipped through chute drains straight out of the transom. The boom-mounted mainsheet takes a little getting used to



The self-tacking jib also has a single-line barber hauler, which allows the sheeting angle to be changed easily while under way (seen just under the car)



Simple control line layout: red jib sheet and barber hauler, blue kite hoist and pole deployment, yellow kicker. Having controls here keeps the rest of the boat clear

control lines, the VX One is every bit a modern high-performance machine and yet she's designed with ordinary racing sailors in mind.

"From the outset I wanted the boat to be light and lively," says designer Brian Bennett. "I wanted a boat that was good in light airs and outstanding in heavy airs. It also had to be bulletproof, current in terms of design, incorporate modern systems and be easy to handle. But in addition to being the perfect raceboat, it needed to be a fun daysailer where you can take your family for a 15-knot blast."

Sales talk, you may think, but that is precisely what she delivered. Had I looked at her anticipated Portsmouth Yardstick rating – estimated to be 860-885 which is close to that of a twin-trapeze RS800, or even her IRC at 1.012 (the same as a 32ft JPK 1010) – I would



The upside-down kicker strut (Gnav) keeps the forward area of cockpit clear. Single-spreader carbon mast



A huge spinnaker chute opening makes for easy hoists and drops. The jib has a roller furler



Simple hand adjustments for V1 and D1 shrouds. Lowerers are also included to support the mast at Gnav height

PERFORMANCE

perhaps have been more prepared when we lit the blue touch paper.

But, having joined Bennett aboard his boat for the last day of the inaugural national championships held in Torquay last autumn, I found the sub-eight-knot breeze provided little clue to what she'd be like at full throttle. The real fun came a few weeks later when I borrowed another boat from the builder Ovington Boats and sailed her in more lively conditions out of Lymington.

In around 12-16 knots of breeze with gusts to 18 she lit up downwind, hitting 16 knots with ease. With the bow up and half the boat well out of the water, she not only looked the part, but was a doddle to handle at speed.

With wind against tide, the Solent chop was at its notorious best – short, steep waves set across our track like a deeply ploughed potato field. But with our weight back and her bow up, she made light work of the uneven surface, skipping over each crest effortlessly.

Heeled at speed

On the few occasions that we did faceplant into the back of a wave, we did so because I was trying to sail the boat too upright, as you might a high-performance dinghy. The VX One is different and likes to be heeled slightly at speed in waves to get her onto her aggressive chine. Once there, not only is she developing maximum righting moment and hence power from her hull form, but the rocker in the chine helps her stern to squat down and her bow to rise.

Given her downwind sail area of 46m² (495ft²) you might think that she'd be a handful, especially for the crew, and yet the deck layout and control lines have been so well thought-out that she is no more difficult than my own RS400. In some ways she's easier.

Her spinnaker chute is huge, making for easy hoists and drops using the single recovery line on a two patch arrangement on the kite. The halyard and drop line also deploy and retrieve the carbon bowsprit with ease.

Elsewhere her control line layout throughout is simple and well-executed with control lines that have minimum friction, are led to the right places and are easily accessible. A good example is her self-tacking jib, which includes a simple yet effective barber hauler to change gear in different sea states. Both her jib sheet and barber hauler control lines exit from one swivelling double jammer under the foredeck making them easy to adjust wherever you are.

Upwind she proved stiff and easy to get into the groove and while she likes to be hiked, the shaped side decks make this as easy and comfortable as could be expected.

One detail that does take a little while to get used to is the skiff-style mainsheet system that comes directly off the boom rather than through a cockpit floor-mounted jammer. As any 49er, 29er, or skiff sailor will tell you, there are good reasons why this system works and offers a more efficient way of trimming the mainsail. A floor mounting modification is

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	5.79m	19ft 0in
Beam	2.20m	7ft 3in
Draught	2.11m	6ft 11in
Displacement	260kg	573lb
Mainsail/jib	19.97m ²	215ft ²
Spinnaker	26m ²	280ft ²
Typical crew weight 135-250kg (297-550lb) 2-3 crew		
Price £20,408 ex VAT, inc sails, covers and combi road trailer/landing trolley		
Designed by: Brian Bennett		
Built by: Ovington Boats (UK)		
Mackay (New Zealand)		



▲ Above: although both of us were new to the VX One, she was simple to sail at speed straight away. Lighter crews can sail with three up, and at present there is no crew weight limit

available, but according to Bennett most crews switch back to boom mounting later.

When handling her ashore, her lifting keel, which is raised using the main halyard, means that she can be launched, recovered and trailed on a combi trailer.

She weighs just 260kg all up – the weight of a Wayfarer with someone sitting in it – making her pretty easy to move around on a decent surface and easy to tow with a normal saloon car. Alternatively, her single-point lift means she can be craned with ease.

Two decades of sportsboat activity has now helped to close the dinghy/keelboat gap and encourage more people to downsize and up-speed, but there is still the issue of the

perceived athleticism that is required for anything that has toestraps rather than guardwires. Yet the reality is that you can easily sail this boat without having to hike like an Olympic Gold medallist.

While she was new to the UK and Europe in 2014, the first boat was launched in the USA two years ago and around 100 have already been built to the strict one-design rules.

So for all those facing the wrong way or leaning up against a cold steel rail on the side deck, it really is time to turn around, slip your feet under the toestraps, sheet in and send the VX One downwind. Within minutes you'll be driving like you're in the getaway car and grinning from ear to ear.





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5 TIPS Taking a penalty

Knowing when and why to take a penalty can get lost in the heat of competition. Jonty Sherwill asked top match racer Ian Williams for his tips

“It’s close, but we are easily clearing them,” is the call from the tactician as you beat to windward on port tack. But the breeze is veering and the other boat is now lifted and hailing “starboard”. You press on, confident of still clearing them, but suddenly the other boat crash-tacks onto port and is now shouting “protest!” There’s been no contact, so what do you do now?

Avoidable or not, unexpected incidents like this can jeopardise your results and will

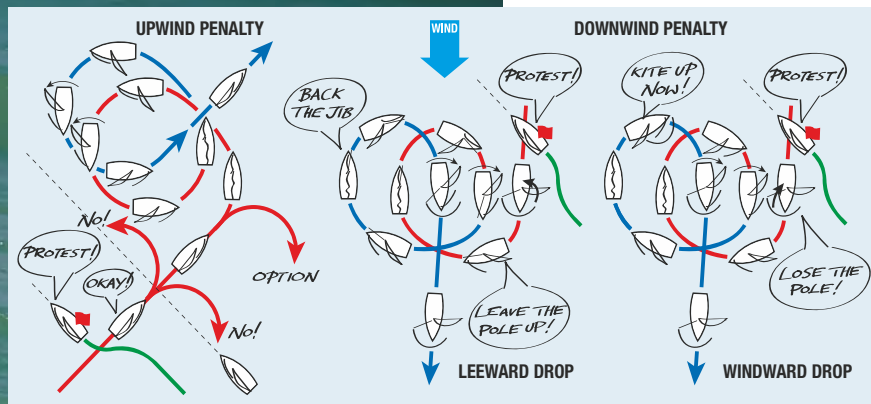
need decisive action. Taking a penalty is the easiest solution – hoping for the best and doing nothing is a risky strategy and likely to see you in the protest room.

Acquiring a good knowledge of the Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) will help you avoid infringements and, while protest meetings are not as daunting as some like to make out, avoiding the humiliation of being given a schoolboy’s guide to the rules is worth the extra homework.

Consider whether it is best to tack first or gybe first when taking a penalty

Nowadays race officers and their assistants are discouraged from lodging protests against competitors for infringements seen while racing, even for sailing the wrong course. It is preferred to rely on other competitors to protest, the exception being during a start sequence.

This can add a moral dilemma that works two ways; if you think you see another boat hit a mark some way off, but near a committee member should you protest and



4 HOW TO DO THE PENALTY

It is worth spending time practising penalties as we do not (hopefully) get much experience of it during racing. Although it must be done immediately, that does not mean it needs to be taken in a blind panic. Keep the turns smooth and use the bottom part of the turn, as you start to wind back into the breeze, to slow the turn slightly and allow the boat to accelerate.

Think in advance about whether it is better to tack first or gybe first – in most instances the tack first is the better option, but there are situations where gybing first will put you in a better position on the fleet.

5 PREPARATION

Use the time while sailing clear to prepare the boat for the manoeuvre, ensuring sheets are clear to run and somebody is ready to ease the vang if the breeze is up. If you are on a downwind leg, you should also consider how you want to exit the penalty and ensure the spinnaker and pole are set up ready.

On some boats you may be able to leave the pole on by executing a leeward drop, then you are ready to hoist immediately after the penalty. Or it may be better to do a windward drop so you can hoist out of the last tack without the pole and do the last gybe with the spinnaker drawing.

1 WHEN TO TAKE A PENALTY

When another boat protests, you have to make an instant decision whether to take a penalty or not. Of course, your first thought will be whether you think you have infringed or not but, if you believe you have not, you also need to consider the likelihood of the protestor going ahead with the protest and the chances of winning. Most likely they have seen the incident differently from you. Important factors are whether either has a witness, who had the best view of the incident and whether there are any onuses in play (see, for example, RRS 18.2(d)).

2 HOW LONG DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE YOUR PENALTY?

If the Sailing Instructions say nothing about penalties, the default is RRS 44, and 44.2 states that penalty turns should be taken 'as soon after the incident as possible'. In practice, many boats push the definition of this, but rarely get punished for it, so each class tends to find its own understanding of what is acceptable. Getting well clear to avoid impeding other boats is important, especially at busy mark roundings.

3 TYPES OF PENALTY – READ THE SAILING INSTRUCTIONS

There are few things worse than infringing a rule and then realising you do not know what penalty you have to take. Is it one turn, two turns, or a scoring penalty? There's no time to read the Sailing Instructions (SIs) at that point so make sure you know what is required in advance, which may include having a yellow flag ready to display if it's scoring penalties (RRS 44.3). Unless otherwise specified in the SIs, the penalty for touching a mark (RRS 31) is a one-turn penalty.

risk being accused of gamesmanship, and if you touch a mark and no one sees or protests should you take a penalty?

Whether to own up or wait to be protested is a personal decision and different classes will have different cultures. In some fleets competitors take responsibility for the fairness of the racing, but the system has come under enough pressure to force some regattas to introduce umpiring, a costly and imperfect solution.

Ian Williams is a four-times ISAF Match Racing World Champion and the only European to hold multiple match racing world titles. He has won the World Match Racing Tour ten times. Williams is also well-known on the professional big boat circuit as a tactician and has been shortlisted twice for the ISAF World Sailor of the Year Award

RULES

■ **RRS 18.2(d)** – 'If there is reasonable doubt that a boat obtained or broke an overlap in time, it shall be presumed that she did not.'

■ **RRS 44.2** – 'After getting well clear of other boats as soon after the incident as possible ...' etc.

■ **Scoring penalties (RRS 44.3(a))** – 'A boat takes a Scoring Penalty by displaying a yellow flag at the first reasonable opportunity after the incident.'

■ **(RRS 31)** – 'While racing, a boat shall not touch a starting mark before starting, a mark that begins, bounds or ends the leg of the course on which she is sailing, or a finishing mark after finishing.'



HYLAS 66'

86

West Mediterranean

German Frers and Queen Long in 2005. Deeply cool pilothouse yacht with a designer interior that is light, airy and totally wow. Easily handled with very modest numbers of bods, and sails like a rocket – we do not jest! Underrated class here in Europe, appreciated properly in the USA - whichever side of the Atlantic you call home, this yacht is definitely worth a gander.



OYSTER 655

£1,500,000 + VAT

West Mediterranean

Performance crustacean from the speedy Rob Humphreys, with a proper sailor's set up and nice carbon rig. Carbon this, and cored that keep her as sleek as a whippet and as swift as an arrow. From 2007, skippered cherished, she also comes with all the blue water kerfuffle and g&t accoutrements.



MOODY 66'

£795,000

East Mediterranean

2005 from VT Halmatic and the incredible Bill Dixon, whose designs do the business both outside and in. Massive amounts of go anywhere rat race escape capsule to the £. Much updated, re-worked and re-widged in this ownership. She is also MCA coded and can wash her face as you like. All this with a price tag that is very much less than bold.



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SWAN 90'

€5,200,000 + VAT
West Mediterranean

When a yacht looks this fab, superlatives become rather unnecessary – her flush decked good looks, and the design and build from the very best talk, without the need for yacht broker mumbo jumbo. From 2010, a cup collector at the 2013 Caribbean 600, she is skipper maintained to the enth, MCA coded and ready to sail. Need we really say more.....?

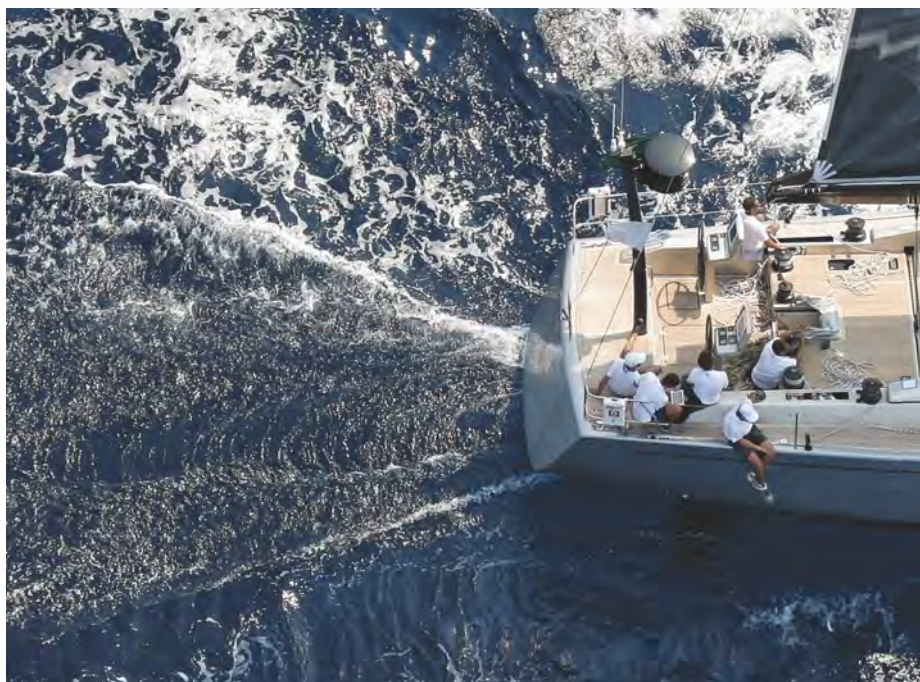


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Nautor Brenta Sloop Swan 76 € 2,900,000 Tax Paid

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2005. AVENTURA was built by Danish Yachts which was a part of the Royal Denship Consortium. Launched in late 2005, she was then taken to Holland Jachtbouw for a final fitting out and delivery to her owner. Since delivery she has completed many miles and is a blue water proven yacht.



Nautor Swan Swan 82-103 | € 3,250,000 Tax Not Paid

Call +44(0) 2380 450 000 www.ancasta.com/Nikata

2005. Nikata is presented in turn-key condition, ready for her new owner to step aboard and sail to the Caribbean. Since her launch in 2005, Nikata has been subject to a rigorous maintenance programme and always under the care of a professional captain and crew.

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Lagoon 620 | € 1,250,000 Tax Not Paid Call: +44 (0)23 8045 0005
2011. Foxy Lady is one of the highest regarded charter yachts in the Caribbean 620 fleet and has been constantly maintained to the highest standards.



Premier Dixon 62 | £ 895,000 Tax Paid Call: +44 (0)1590 673 212
2000. Luxury blue water go anywhere cruising yacht built by Premier Yachts. Steel Hull with teak on ply decks.



Bordeaux 60 | £ 825,000 Tax Not Paid Call: +44 (0)2380 450 000
2011. Beautifully maintained by her first owner the specification is second to none - Carbon mast, V boom, Norths 3DL sails.



Moody 64 | £ 550,000 Tax Not Paid Call: +34 971 719678
2003. A huge amount of boat for the money, offering extended passage making and the ideal holiday yacht.



Contest 55 CS | € 495,000 Tax Paid Call: +33 (0)442 05 88 88
2003. Designed by Doug Petersen and Georg Nissen, the CONTEST 55 CS is built to be sailed by a small crew in comfort.



Swan 65 - 009 | €370,000 Tax Paid Call: +44 (0)23 8045 0000
1974. Beautiful 1974 Sparkman & Stephens designed Swan 65 Ketch. Sweetest of lines and will be sure to turn heads wherever she cruises.



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CNB 76

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Swan 53 built in 2007 "Mellifera".

This is a beautifully presented Swan 53 currently located in the Caribbean. Very light use by her two owners and only for sale as new family means less time for sailing! New nav instruments, rig serviced and looked after by guardinage service in St Martin. Viewing is recommended. Asking GBP779,000 to include VAT.



Swan 53. An ex-Lutine Lloyds yacht club yacht which has undergone extensive recent refit including new teak decks. MCA coded for charter this is the perfect yacht for an owner looking to offset some running costs. Skipper maintained and well presented. Asking GBP 220,000 VAT paid.



Swan 68 Sea Eagle by German Frers
Built in 1993 and cruising in Scotland this summer. A classic Swan ideal for long distance cruising. With a large owners cabin aft and three further guest cabins. Asking GBP 750,000.



Classic Sparkman and Stephens designed Swan 55
In my humble opinion, the 55 is one of the most beautiful Swans ever built. Huge refit in 2002 when the boat was almost rebuilt. Located here on the Hamble and asking GBP 250,000.



Swan 46 Mark II Asterix by German Frers
The condition of the interior of "Asterix" can only be described as incredible. Located in Holland, this is a well-equipped, competitively priced classic Swan 46. The 46 is one of the most popular Swans with over 100 built and has an enviable reputation for superb sea keeping. Asking price recently reduced to Euros 225,000 VAT paid.



Swan 60 "Fenix"
German Frers design regatta version of this classic cruiser racer. Superb accommodation and excellent deck layout for racing, cruising and charter work. In great condition having been skipper maintained and asking USD 1,200,000. Offers will be considered.



Swan 37 "Ondina of Polruan"
Classic S and S design with beautiful lines and great cruising potential. This example has been carefully restored some years ago and is presented in quite excellent condition. For sale due to owners other commitments and located in the West Country. Asking GBP58,000.

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2005 Oyster 72 *Spirit of Montpelier*

The fastest Oyster ever launched, *Spirit of Montpelier* is a very special 72 with a rare combination of speed and luxury. With beautiful teak joinery and up to eleven berths in four cabins. Now urgently for sale, bring offers!

£650,000 ex VAT

Lying: Oyster Palma



1997 Oyster 70 *Thunder*

An elegant yacht that sails as well as she looks with a dark blue hull that always turns heads. She has taken her owner around the globe in comfort, style and safety. Well maintained in turnkey condition.

£800,000 VAT paid

Lying: Canaries

PRICE REDUCED



2008 Oyster 655 *Proteus*

Proteus is one of the most fully equipped and luxuriously appointed Oysters ever built. Custom deck hardware by Harken, a Hall Spars carbon mast and boom as well as high performance sails make for sprightly performance.

£1,650,000 ex VAT

Lying: Oyster Palma

NEW LISTING



2008 Oyster 62 *Uhuru of Lymington*

Currently completing a winter refit programme, *Uhuru* is presented to market in turnkey condition and is ready to go for her new owner. *Uhuru* is a real head turner. Beautiful condition throughout and sensibly priced.

£1,095,000 ex VAT

Lying: West Med



2000 Oyster 56 *Olanta*

Custom layout with large twin berths in the owner's stateroom, and two further twin cabins, with a large sail locker forward, ideal for family cruising and long distance sailing. Recent new engine and chartplotter.

£435,000 VAT paid

Lying: Oyster Palma



2002 Oyster 53 *Dragonfly*

Well maintained, with an up-to-date electronics package. *Dragonfly* benefits from a sloop rig and in mast furling, set up for ease of use. Below decks, the teak joinery provides a warm and luxurious feel.

£440,000 VAT paid

Lying: Oyster UK

PRICE REDUCED



2003 Oyster 53 *Janus of London*

A beautiful example of the Oyster 53. One owner from new, she has been well cared for. Cutter rigged with electric mainsail furling. Six berths in three cabins, with an additional single cabin/workshop.

£395,000 ex VAT

Lying: Oyster Palma



1994 Oyster 485 *The Oyster*

Classic Holman and Pye Oyster, teak joinery and six berths in three cabins. Cutter rig with in-mast furling. This yacht would suit a couple or family who are looking for an ocean cruising thoroughbred.

£219,000 VAT paid

Lying: West Med

NEW LISTING



2004 Oyster 47 *Jubilate Mare*

Jubilate Mare was the last of the Oyster 47's to be constructed. Beautifully finished in teak interior. Equipment includes generator, in-mast furling, electric winches and much more. Sleeps six in three cabins.

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OYSTER 56

2004 cutter rigged with teak decks from first owner. Has been skipper maintained since day one and no expense was spared to keep her like new. Not only did she win 9 times the Oyster 'Concours d'Elegance' trophy, but she has also won several Oyster regattas. This prize winning seagoing cruising yacht with racing features is easily handled with two on board. She is equipped with all comforts to make long cruises, fitted out with all kinds of extra options, has an extensive sail wardrobe and a comprehensive navigation package. **1/2 685,000**

SAILING YACHTS

Beneteau Oceanis 393	2003	1/2	65,000
Bavaria 40 Vision	2007	1/2	84,500
Moody 425	1989	1/2	89,500
Beneteau Oceanis 44CC	1995	1/2	95,000
Hunter Legend 44	2005	1/2	110,000
Beneteau Oceanis 42CC	2005	1/2	119,900
Beneteau Oceanis 43	2009	1/2	135,000
Sun Odyssey 42i	2008	1/2	135,000
Oceanis 50 performance	2007	* 3/4	175,000
Nauticat 331	2007	1/2	185,000
Hallberg Rassy 45	1989	1/2	195,000
Hallberg Rassy 49	1984	1/2	199,000
Wauquiez 47 PS	2007	1/2	229,000
Nordship 360DS	2011	1/2	249,500
Comet 455	2007	1/2	250,000
Hutting 40	1999	1/2	278,000
Grand Soleil 50	2008	1/2	289,000
Nautor Swan 55	1991	1/2	299,000
Hallberg Rassy 46	2000		POA
Contest 55CS	2001	1/2	475,000
Lagoon 570	2004	1/2	550,000
Puffin 50	2003	1/2	695,000
Bloemsa 58ft	2008	1/2	1,050,000

TRULY CLASSIC 52"



Sloop designed by Hoek Design Naval Architects with teak flush deck and low coach roof. Very well equipped with an extensive sail wardrobe. The deck layout allows almost single handed and two can cruise with consummate ease. She can also be swiftly converted into a racing boat, with overlapping headsails and spinnaker. The hull construction is in red cedar/glass-fibre composite. Always professionally maintained and updated, therefore she is in a very good condition throughout. **1/2 650,000**

BENETEAU FIRST 50S



Commissioned in 2009. Fully battened mainsail with lazy jacks, Furling genoa and new gennaker with equipment. Equipped with generator, solar panels, carbon gangway, Eberspächer heating, dinghy, life raft etc. Navigation includes a full Raymarine package with radar, chart plotter AIS and Navtex. She accommodates 3 double berth cabins and 2 bathrooms and well equipped galley. Possible to take over leasing.. **1/2 225,000**

JEANNEAU 57



2011 with teak decks, 4 cabins version convertible into 2 cabins + 1 crew cabin with deck access. Hydraulic gangway, generator, inverter, airco, washing machine, dish washer. Electric winches, gennaker, full battened main sail, genoa, bimini and cockpit cushions. Full Raymarine electronic with repeaters autopilot, radar etc. Garage with tender, bow thruster, rope cutter, audio system Bose. Suitable for charter but also convertible into an owner's version. Under leasing. **1/2 439,000 ex tax**

HUNTER 50 CC



2010 demo with Mariner package, bow thruster and up-graded engine and alternator. In-mast furling main sail, Furling genoa, self-tacking staysail, spinnaker gear and electric winches. Comfortable with heating, entertainment package, leather cushions, electric toilets, additional freezer and inverter, bimini, dodger and sundeck cushions. Full 570 navigation package including autopilot. **1/2 275,000 ex tax**

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KEN FREIVOKH

Angus Gavin – one of my regular crew on my quarter tonner, *Flying Fox* – proposed that after Cowes Week, most of our crew join Michael Campbell on his OOD34 *Allamanda II* for the 1979 Fastnet Race. The plan was that Angus would navigate, and Michael and I would take turns as watch leaders with our respective crews.

Late afternoon on Monday 13 August a clutch of OOD 34s were all in close vicinity to each other and competitive spirit was high. Even though the wind was gusting around 24 knots, we were still holding onto our masthead spinnaker, but it was certainly starting to feel rather precarious and, following a particularly vicious gust, the kite backed, then filled with gusto, and the mast toppled.

We had been steering on port tack, some 20° off the rhumb line to the Fastnet Rock, over the shallows of the Labadie Bank and clearly into the path of the depression. With the seas becoming more vicious, it became quite a task to untangle the mast, boom and spinnaker pole and, with our largest bolt croppers, to cut the broken mast free. We lashed the boom and pole to the hull with the intention of attempting a jury rig later, and decided to motor to Cork.

After a couple of hours it was time for Michael's crew to take over the watch. I was in the companionway ready to go below when I suddenly saw the most interminably long wave, an angry vertical wall with a breaking crest, and it was obvious that we were in trouble. I shouted to Michael and his two crew and braced myself for the inevitable.

The yacht pitchpoled and eventually, desperately slowly, rolled upright. The cockpit was empty. We could see the harness lines and managed to recover two crew, but Michael was still missing, with the harness line seemingly stuck. Suddenly it freed, and we were able to pull Michael back on board. He had been wearing a new offshore jacket with built-in harness straps and one of the straps had broken – amazingly, the other saved him.

The yacht was a mess, with 50 per cent of the cabin flooded. The contents of the lockers had come out and were floating waist high – that included the lovely Fortnum & Mason hampers that we were looking forward to eating nearer the Rock. The cooker had jumped off its gimbals and smashed the cuddy windows. The engine was totally



Me the helm of a Trapper 300, with John Collier – my boss at the time. This brings back many happy memories of my apprenticeship days

flooded, and there was oil everywhere. The washboards had disappeared and the yacht no longer felt safe.

The obvious next step was to launch the liferaft, but we discovered it had fallen out of the locker, punctured itself on the stanchions and was spinning on its painter behind the boat. In hindsight, that was perhaps a lucky turn of events and probably saved our lives, as most of the casualties on the race befell those who abandoned their yachts in the belief that the liferaft was a safer alternative.

By then, life had become almost surreal. The wind was so strong that it was not possible to breathe facing it. We crawled along the cockpit floor and managed to lash the tiller and improvise drogues. Somehow, even though it was the middle of the night, it did not seem dark. The huge waves with foaming crests reflected the moonlight and the high-pitched whistling of the wind was almost unbearable, interrupted only by the crashing of waves against the hull.

To protect the cabin, we tore the table from its base and lashed it across the companionway. We then decided to brace ourselves in our bunks and wait until daylight, hoping the storm would abate. Spirits were kept high thanks to John Lushington, who had joined us as the nominated cook and kept formulating survival plans.

The next morning the wind seemed to have eased a fraction. We started to bail the cabin, then retrieved the boom and spinnaker pole, which had been dangerously striking the hull sides, and lashed them on deck.

It was nearly 1800 on Tuesday, almost 20 hours after we lost the mast, when we were aware of a completely different sound. It was a Sea King helicopter hovering overhead. Eventually, one by one, the hook came down and a crewmember was winched up. When finally lifted away from the yacht, I suddenly felt safe for the first time. We were the last crew to be rescued from the worst yachting disaster of all time.

Interviewed by Sue Pelling



Ken Freivokh (69) is a yacht designer, head of Ken Freivokh Design (KFD) which is known for its ground-breaking luxury interior designs such as the 288ft *Maltese Falcon*, one of the largest privately owned yachts in the world.

Born in Los Angeles and raised in Peru,

Freivokh graduated with a BSc and a Masters degree in Architecture before completing a postgraduate course at the Royal College of Art.

His passion for sailing and racing lured him into a career within the marine industry. One of his first commissions, before he focused on

custom superyachts such as Mike Slade's maxi yacht *Leopard*, was to design the interiors of a range of yachts for Sunseeker. Although he is a keen Dragon sailor, his latest projects, which include the 462ft *Dream Symphony* and 328ft *Stealth*, leave him little time to compete.



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